

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

Annual Report 2022/23



Publication Information

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

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Foreword

My third annual report summarises progress against each of the remaining 39 actions in the *Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan (Year Two to Five Plan)*, comments on the progress of the four recommendations I made in my Year Two annual report, and provides one additional recommendation to improve the focus of reform activities.

At this point in the reform, and with 15 of the 41 actions completed, I recommend a comprehensive review of the remaining Year Two to Five Plan actions. A review at this point would ensure the reform is on track and making the best use of what agencies and government have learned from the first three years of reform implementation. This review should leverage the positive and constructive progress to develop an agreed definition of complementary fire services and focus on delivering those actions and deliverables that best achieve the 2017 *Fire Services Statement* outcomes.

Continuous improvement in Victoria's reformed fire services is an ongoing process that requires commitment, dedication, and a willingness to learn from past experiences. Both CFA and FRV have established the foundational strategies to promote a culture of continuous improvement, the objectives of the activities in the reform's implementation plan are clear, and agencies have taken steps to establish performance indicators to demonstrate that the objectives have been met.

Much activity has been completed in the last three years. However, I continue to observe systemic difficulties with some aspects of reform. In Year Three of monitoring, the cause of these difficulties is becoming more apparent, and some data is available to demonstrate the impact these challenges have had on service delivery. This impact is most clearly seen in the shared delivery of land use planning, dangerous goods, and caravan parks services. While CFA and FRV have strengthened joint operational governance arrangements, I have found that progress is slow when action delivery is shared between agencies. I also note that where decisions are informed by intersections between the secondment arrangements established by the reform, the *Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020*, or restricted by legislation, progress is also impacted.

Pleasingly, agencies are making good progress when they are directly and solely responsible for action delivery. FRV's efforts to establish their values and strategic direction, and CFA's efforts to improve diversity and inclusion outcomes are highlights of this third year of reform implementation.

I thank CFA, DJCS and FRV for their support and efforts in providing evidence to inform my assessment. They have consistently and willingly assisted and are open to the opportunities I see to improve the reform implementation program. They continue to show what I believe to be a genuine commitment to making Victoria's reformed fire services work more effectively for the community.

I would also like to acknowledge recent leadership changes in the fire services and the broader emergency management portfolio, which will support the continued implementation of Victoria's Fire Services Reform. I thank Commissioner Ken Block for his time as the inaugural Fire Rescue Commissioner – his leadership was instrumental in establishing and leading the newly formed FRV. I welcome Gavin Freeman AFSM as the new Fire Rescue Commissioner. Commissioner Freeman's experience with CFA and FRV stands him in good stead to guide FRV's delivery. I would also like to welcome Jenni Rigby as the new CEO of Emergency Management Victoria and Rick Nugent APM as Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner following the retirement of Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp AM APM.

Monitoring Victoria's reformed fire services supports volunteer and career firefighters and all the volunteers and staff who support them on the front lines, and I thank them for their commitment to protecting the Victorian community.



Hon. Niall Blair
Fire Services Implementation Monitor

Executive summary

This is the Fire Services Implementation Monitor's (FSIM's) third annual report on the progress of the Victorian Government's Fire Services Reform implementation. The report delivers on FSIM's obligations under section 131(1) of the [Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958](#) (FRV Act) to monitor and review the progress of the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) in carrying out the updated May 2023 [Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan \(Year Two to Five Plan\)](#).

FSIM assessed CFA's, DJCS's and FRV's Year Two to Five Plan action progress from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and makes one recommendation relating to a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan. FSIM has also reported on the progress of four recommendations made in the [Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22](#) (FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22).

Potential barriers impacting reform implementation

As part of the Fire Services Reform, all CFA career firefighters were transferred to the newly established FRV, reinstating CFA as a volunteer firefighting agency. To support the CFA and its volunteers, a Secondment Agreement was established. This agreement outlines the secondment arrangements for FRV Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs), Commanders, Instructors, Practical Area for Drills (PAD) Supervisors and PAD Operators to provide operational and management support, including administrative, training, community safety and fire safety support, to CFA. FSIM considers that the intersection between the Secondment Agreement and the *Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020* (FRV Operational EA) may hinder the CFA's Chief Officer's (CO, CFA) ability to manage seconded staff. For example, under the FRV Operational EA, seconded performance and conduct management must be referred to and managed by FRV. This provision affects the ability of the CO, CFA to oversee the performance and appointment of seconded staff under their command. Limitations such as this restricted CFA's ability to investigate and address possible performance, occupational health and safety, or disciplinary issues of FRV staff in seconded roles.

The reform also transferred some legislative functions from CFA to FRV. FRV is now able to deliver end-to-end structural fire safety services and conduct structural fire investigations in the Country Area of Victorian (CAoV). However, as of 30 June 2023, CFA cannot delegate some legislative powers to FRV for end-to-end service delivery of functions transferred in the CAoV for dangerous goods and caravan parks. As a result, CFA and FRV share service delivery roles. Shared delivery of land use planning services following the transfer of resources on 1 July 2020 also continued to cause challenges for the agencies. Since the inception of the reform, there has been a declining trend in referral compliance with statutory timeframes where these services are shared.

These barriers have affected the delivery of several reform activities, particularly actions 3.9, 5.1 and 5.4 and their interdependent actions. FSIM considered these barriers to reform implementation will impact whether the reform will achieve its stated outcomes of creating a modern, integrated, and sustainable fire services model for a safer Victoria.

FSIM plans to conduct a more in-depth evaluation on these issues in financial year (FY) 2023-24 and will seek specific, verifiable, measurable and documented evidence from the agencies to assess and demonstrate the impact of these potential barriers to reform implementation.

Implementation progress

FSIM outlines progress for 39 of the 41 Year Two to Five Plan actions, noting that two actions (5.5 and 5.6) were completed in FY 2021-22. As at 30 June 2023, FSIM found that:

- 13 actions were completed
- 10 actions were progressing and on track
- 8 actions were progressing and experiencing minor delays
- 5 actions were progressing and experiencing significant delays
- 3 actions had not yet commenced.

As at 30 June 2023, four actions (2.3, 3.6, 4.6 and 5.1) did not meet their Year Two to Five Plan completion dates. At the end of the reporting period, agencies had not yet requested an extension to the delivery date for these actions.

In FY 2022-23, FSIM did not undertake effectiveness assessments of the 13 completed implementation plan actions against their intended objectives, as these actions were being completed during the reporting period. FSIM considers the effectiveness assessment as a longer-term proposition given that embedding implementation plan actions is complex, with multifaceted impacts that emerge over time.

Summary of progress

Year Two to Five Plan actions led by a single agency are progressing well. Actions requiring joint agency delivery have led to complications and delays in implementation.

Individually, CFA and FRV have each progressed work to recognise volunteers and staff and shape their respective organisation's cultural and strategic directions. FRV released their inaugural FRV Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (FRV Strategy) in FY 2022-23. Developed through engagement with all FRV staff, including seconded staff, it outlines FRV's vision, priorities, and values, including a roadmap to achieve its intended outcomes.

CFA released its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2025 (D&I Strategy), which promotes, supports, and enables diversity in CFA. Notably, the D&I Strategy outlines actions to improve diversity and inclusion data, which will help CFA better understand its membership and uncover potential barriers to creating a more diverse organisation that reflects the community it serves.

CFA and FRV completed work to recognise the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters. The agencies collaborated to support nominations for national awards, and CFA expanded the CFA Service Awards to ensure seconded staff can be recognised for their service and contribution to CFA.

Jointly, CFA and FRV continue to face significant challenges to progressing the Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments related to leave, performance and misconduct management, relief, and vacancy management. These challenges are due to the intersection between the Secondment Agreement and the FRV Operational EA and the time required to run consultation processes between CFA and FRV and between FRV and UFU Victoria. These challenges have not been resolved since the establishment of the reform and while some progress has been made, FSIM observes that the extended timelines put forward by the agencies to complete the remaining schedules and supplementary instruments are ambitious.

CFA and FRV improved collaboration on issues requiring consultation (e.g., Service Level Deed of Agreement (SDLA) schedules and Secondment Agreement Supplementary Instruments). CFA and FRV also developed a workflow approval process that outlines the entire consultation and approval process, endorsed by the CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee (HoA) in April 2023. While there are further opportunities to improve the application of the workflow, clarifying consultation stages and responsibilities between agencies has been a positive step.

FSIM observes that the CFA Capability Statement (action 5.1) and FRV Strategic Workforce Plan (Operations) 2022-2027 (FRV Workforce Plan) (action 5.4) are reliant on each other. The CFA Capability Statement outlines the technical skills, competency, and support requirements for staff seconded from FRV to deliver services effectively in the CAoV. It is essential that FRV understand CFA's capability and capacity requirements and that its workforce planning enables the provision of secondees that meet CFA's operational and capability needs.

FSIM notes that FRV reported action 5.4 – the draft FRV Workforce Plan – as complete, as FRV had transitioned the workforce forecast and gap analysis, including work to consider CFA's requirements, to business-as-usual (BAU) activities in 2024. As a result, there is now no requirement for FRV to include updates on its workforce planning and gap analysis work in its quarterly reform progress report to the Minister. It is critical to the reform's success that FRV's draft workforce plan transparently forecasts changing workforce requirements through to 2026 and accurately accounts for its secondment obligations to CFA.

CFA and FRV continue to face challenges implementing actions to achieve harmonisation and interoperable service delivery (actions 3.9 and 3.10). The Fire Services Operational Committee (FSOC) identified several issues that impact its effectiveness in supporting interoperability between CFA and

FRV, such as the availability and consistency of key personnel, requirements for external stakeholder engagement, and the ability to develop and deliver on clear work plans with defined objectives and activities. FSIM has not yet been able to quantify the impact of these issues on the community as several operational actions (e.g., harmonisation activities, developing interoperability procedures (IPs) and finalised schedules and supplementary instruments) are not yet complete.

FSIM also found no agreed acceptance criteria for capital works programs delivered between CFA and FRV under actions 3.5 and 3.4 that aligned to the Year Two to Five Plan action objectives. Under the Victorian Government's integrated fire services infrastructure delivery arrangements, Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA) project manages some station builds on behalf of CFA under action 3.2. At the end of the reporting period, FRV was consulting with the UFU on the integrated fire services infrastructure arrangements and the MoU for the delivery of specific capital and infrastructure works on behalf of FRV had not yet been signed. As a result, FRV capital works in action 3.4 have not yet transferred to CSBA. Agreed acceptance criteria and clarity on consultation requirements are needed throughout the life of these projects to ensure the objectives of the actions are met.

Assessing impact of reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV

As noted in the FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, there are significant gaps in understanding many of CFA's and FRV's service delivery costs and cost drivers, as well as identifying emerging cost pressures that could potentially pose risks to the agencies' ongoing financial sustainability.¹ CFA and FRV continue to work with DJCS to focus on uplifting their respective financial planning and forecasting capabilities.

CFA, DJCS and FRV continue progressing work on actions 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4. The outputs of these actions are crucial inputs to, and have significant interdependencies with, actions 5.7 and 5.8.

Given the early stages of work to address data gaps, quantify costs, cost drivers and uplift forecasting capabilities, FSIM considers there is currently insufficient information to make an informed assessment of the impact of reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV. FSIM will continue to monitor these work programs, noting that an impact assessment on financial sustainability is a long-term proposition.

FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 recommendations

Government and agencies have acted on FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 recommendations one and two by establishing a senior executive governance body capable of addressing broader strategic reform challenges. FSIM has seen clear progress, with CFA, DJCS and FRV initiating positive and constructive actions to address these recommendations.

Agencies have progressed recommendation three and have provided performance measures as part of their evidence summaries to FSIM where possible, which will support FSIM in undertaking effectiveness assessments in future years.

DJCS progressed recommendation four (financial sustainability governance body) by analysing and identifying the interdependencies between Year Two to Five Plan actions and establishing oversight arrangements to identify, understand and resolve strategic financial issues across the reform.

FSIM's Annual Report 2022/23 recommendation

Over the past three years, CFA, DJCS and FRV have accomplished substantial reform efforts. These three years have also provided valuable insights and lessons on practical challenges encountered in delivering actions, especially where multiple agencies are responsible for delivering an action.

Over the last twelve months, FSIM has witnessed proactive and collaborative engagement between CFA and FRV, with some joint training and joint exercises undertaken across the state, and both agencies are developing procedures to ensure consistent and more regular joint exercises across the state. Volunteers and career firefighters continue to respond to incidents, demonstrating the continued on-the-ground commitment of volunteer and career firefighters to keep Victorians safe.

¹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 21 September 2023, <<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/FSIM-Annual-Report-2021-22.pdf>>, pg. 129.

FSIM recommends conducting a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan and remaining implementation plan actions (Table 1), given FSIM's FY 2022-23 action implementation progress assessments and to assist Victoria's fire services to make the most of their progress so far. This review should consider which remaining implementation plan activities most significantly contribute to the intended success at year five for each priority area and be updated with pragmatic and achievable timelines to focus on those activities. The review should be guided by the broader outcomes in the Fire Services Statement, leverage a shared definition of complementary fire services and consider the impacts of other enabling instruments (e.g., Secondment Agreement, legislation).

Table 1: FSIM's Annual Report 2022/23 recommendation

Recommendation	
<p>Review of Year Two to Five Plan actions to more accurately reflect achievable timeframes and leverage three years of reform implementation knowledge and experiences</p>	<p>Victorian Government, in close consultation with fire services agencies, should conduct a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan. This review should be informed by the practical implementation challenges to embedding reforms over the past three years, FSIM's observations, and be guided by the current Year Two to Five Plan success statements and the outcomes of the Fire Services Statement.</p> <p>The review should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver an updated implementation plan with achievable timeframes • focus on priority actions that will give measurable, demonstrable, and practical effect to the government's commitments in the Fire Services Statement and the reform's vision of a modern fire services model for a safer Victoria • be guided by and leverage an agreed and shared definition of complementary fire services • determine areas for further improvement or development beyond Year Five, to inform the next phase of reform implementation beyond the Year Two to Five Plan. <p>This review should take advantage of the strengthened governance arrangements established in FY 2022-23.</p>

1. Introduction

In 2017, the Victorian Government released the [Fire Services Statement](#), setting out the vision of a modern fire services model for a safer Victoria. The Victorian Government enshrined in legislation a requirement for the Minister for Emergency Services (the Minister) to prepare an Implementation Plan to enact this vision. The Implementation Plan guides a ten-year Fire Services Reform program to modernise the fire services to keep Victorians safe.

This FY 2022-23 annual report provides FSIM's assessment of progress against the Year Two to Five Plan. The annual report covers the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and delivers on the requirement, under section 131(1) of the FRV Act, for FSIM to prepare an annual report on its findings about the performance of FSIM's functions.

Fire services reform

On 1 July 2020, Victoria's new fire services model was implemented through the establishment of FRV, which brought together the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and CFA career firefighters and restored CFA to a community-based, volunteer firefighting organisation.

The reform resulted in designated staff and asset transfers from CFA to FRV. The FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 outlined details of these transfers, including associated property, rights, liabilities, and obligations. Further to this restructure and to ensure CFA could continue providing appropriate operational leadership and support to volunteers, CFA and FRV entered into a Secondment Agreement on 31 October 2020.

This Secondment Agreement establishes arrangements for the secondment of FRV Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs), Commanders, instructors, Practical Areas for Drills (PAD) Supervisors and PAD Operators to CFA to provide operational and volunteer support. The FRV Operational EA details the terms and conditions governing FRV staff, and the Secondment Agreement sets out that when FRV staff are seconded to CFA, their work is under the command and control of the CO, CFA.²

Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan

The Fire Services Statement, together with the [Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan](#) and Year Two to Five Plan provide five priority areas to guide a ten-year reform program to modernise the fire services that keep Victorians safe. Each action in the Year Two to Five Plan, aligns to one of five priority areas.

Under section 130 of the FRV Act, the Minister is required to prepare an Implementation Plan within 60 days of the day the FRV Act commenced and must include actions relating to:

- the adoption of procedures by CFA and FRV to enable them to have regard to the priorities set out in the Fire Services Statement in carrying out their functions
- the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV, including ensuring that volunteer brigades are not adversely affected by the fire services reforms
- improvements in the ability of CFA, FRV and other emergency agencies to work effectively across organisational boundaries
- the provision of operational and management support by FRV to CFA, and the effectiveness of this support in enabling CFA to meet the objectives set out in section 2 of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*³
- improvements in staff training in relation to CFA and FRV
- development of an initial and a long-term funding plan to determine the financial requirements of CFA and FRV.

² CFA/FRV Secondment Agreement, s7(a): The CO, CFA has the order and control of the work of all Secondees who are made available to CFA under this Agreement. The Parties agree that all Secondees will implement command and control arrangements at the direction of the CO, CFA.

³ [Country Fire Authority Act 1958 s2](#): Objectives relating to interaction between fire services agencies.

In October 2020, the Minister tabled the *Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan* in Parliament. The *Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan* included actions for CFA, FRV and government to establish modern, efficient, and flexible systems and arrangements and to design the necessary methodologies and approaches for agencies to perform their functions.

In November 2021, the Minister tabled the Year Two to Five Plan in Parliament. This plan consists of actions that were reframed and rolled over from the *Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan* and new actions that reflect organisational reform priorities and built on achievements from the first year of reform.

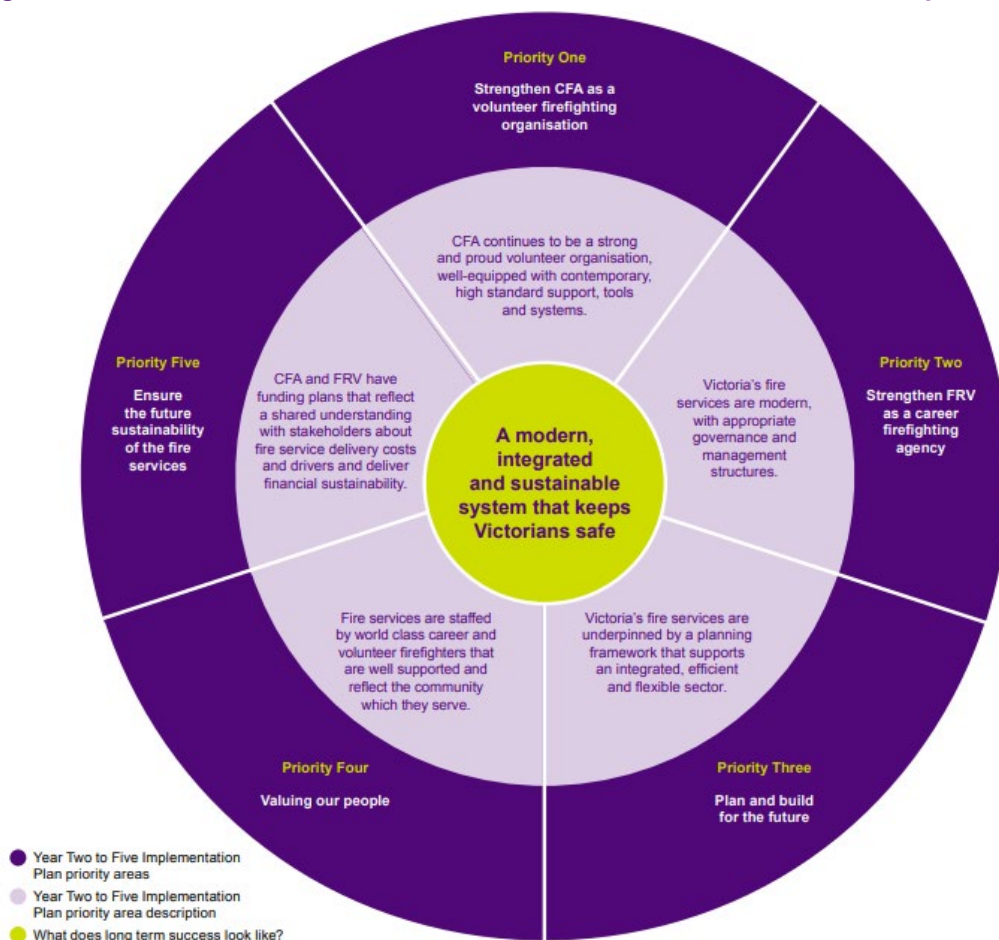
In May 2023, the Minister tabled the updated Year Two to Five Plan in Parliament, setting out new completion dates for 19 actions and some minor wording changes.⁴

For each Implementation Plan iteration, actions and associated amendments were recommended by the respective action leads – CFA, DJCS and FRV – and approved by the Minister. Agency-defined deliverables guide delivery of actions. CFA, DJCS and FRV report quarterly to the Minister on the status of Year Two to Five Plan action deliverables, with quarterly reporting coordinated by DJCS. When agencies determine that an action has been completed, CFA, DJCS and FRV follow a formal process to acquit actions to the Minister.

The Year Two to Five Plan outlined 41 actions across five priority areas to be delivered across four years of a 10-year reform. It provided success statements at year five and outlined actions to operationalise and embed reform commitments.

Figure 1 outlines the linkages between the Year Two to Five Plan priorities and Fire Services Statement outcomes.

Figure 1: Fire Services Statement outcomes and the Year Two to Five Plan priorities



⁴The May 2023 updated Year Two to Five Plan include new action completion dates for 1.5, 2.4, 3.3, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7 and 5.8. Details relating to initial and updated completion dates are included in action progress summaries (section six of this report).

2. Methodology

FSIM's Year Three methodology

FSIM's Annual Report FY 2022-23 objectives

FSIM is required under sections 131(1) of the FRV Act to:

- report on the progress of CFA and FRV in completing implementation plan actions
- assess the effectiveness of methods CFA and FRV adopted in completing implementation plan actions
- assess the impact of the fire services reforms upon the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV
- assess ongoing efforts to improve the interaction between CFA and FRV.

This report provides a summary of Year Two to Five Plan action progress from the period 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023. Specifically, the assessment acquits FSIM's legislative requirements under section 131(1)(a)(i) of the FRV Act.

By assessing and reporting on the progress of Year Two to Five Plan actions, FSIM provides transparency and assurance to the public that government and fire services agencies are held accountable for the ongoing implementation of Victoria's fire services reforms.

This report contains:

- an update on implementation of recommendations made in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 (section three)
- potential barriers to reform impacting implementation of key Year Two to Five Plan actions (section four)
- a status update of all 41 Year Two to Five Plan actions as reported to the Minister (section five)
- a progress summary assessment of the 41 Year Two to Five Plan actions as at 30 June 2023, by priority area (section six)
- an assessment of impact of the reform on financial sustainability of CFA and FRV (section seven)
- FSIM's concluding remarks for this Year Three report (section eight).

Assessing progress

FSIM monitors the implementation of actions by assessing progress against actions set out in the Year Two to Five Plan. In FY 2022-23, FSIM received progress updates from CFA, DJCS and FRV for all outstanding actions. In requesting documentation from agencies, FSIM requested evidence relating to how each action was being delivered, delivery against action milestones (where provided), risks impacting action delivery, and risks of the action not meeting its objective. FSIM communicated with nominated representatives of agencies to clarify information or request additional documentation. FSIM also referred to a range of publicly available information in preparing this report.

FSIM provides a context statement and progress summary to assess each action, and includes information relating to project management, communication, interaction between CFA, FRV and other organisations, reform activities transition to BAU, or governance where relevant.

Following each assessment of action progress, FSIM provides a 'status': progressing, implemented, partially implemented, or closed, along with findings on risks and issues identified. Table 2 describes the status that FSIM assigns for each action assessed.

Table 2: FSIM progress monitoring and assessment definitions

Status	Description
Progressing	FSIM considers the action is in progress. FSIM will continue to monitor and report on its status.
Implemented	FSIM considers the action has been completed in accordance with the Year Two to Five Plan action scope. FSIM may undertake further assessment of effectiveness against actions that are 'implemented' in future.
Partially implemented	FSIM considers the action has either not been delivered in accordance with the Year Two to Five Plan action deliverables or that there are outstanding matters to resolve before FSIM considers the action complete. FSIM may undertake further assessment of effectiveness against actions that are 'partially implemented' in future.
Closed	FSIM has evaluated the effectiveness of the implemented action against its' intended objectives. FSIM will undertake no further activity.

Assessing effectiveness

FSIM has legislative provisions, under s131(1)(ii) of the FRV Act, to assess the effectiveness of methods used or activities undertaken by agencies in completing an implementation plan action and meeting the action's objective.

In FY 2022-23, FSIM did not evaluate the effectiveness of completed implementation plan actions against their intended objectives, as CFA, DJCS, and FRV were completing actions during the reporting period. FSIM considers the effectiveness assessment as a longer-term proposition given that embedding implementation plan actions is complex with multifaceted impacts that unfold over time.

FSIM intends to identify completed actions to be assessed for effectiveness in future reporting based on set criteria. In FY 2022-23, FSIM sought information from agencies, such as performance measures and supporting evidence, to demonstrate progress towards an action's objective. FSIM will build on the information received to date and through engagement with relevant stakeholders to support evidence-based effectiveness assessments in future reports.

Information collection

FSIM collected information via multiple channels and stakeholders to inform the FY 2022-23 assessment. FSIM reviewed and analysed documents, attended events and meetings, and conducted interviews to inform this report. FSIM is a standing observer at the weekly HoA and the Fire Services Strategic Executive Committee (SEC).

FSIM's approach to the collection, use and disclosure of information is underpinned by its obligations under section 138 of the FRV Act not to use or disclose confidential information obtained or received in the course of, or as a result of, the performance of FSIM's functions except as permitted by the FRV Act.

FRV experienced a cyber-attack in December 2022, which severely impacted its information technology (IT) systems. In FY 2022-23, FRV undertook a significant program of work to investigate the cyber-attack and restore the IT environment. FRV advised that it developed and implemented interim solutions to maintain system functionality and data collection functions while developing a longer-term recovery solution.

FRV further implemented business continuity measures, workarounds, and contingencies to ensure service delivery continued. During this period, FRV crews continued to turn out and respond to incidents using mobile phones, pagers, and radios, and FRV maintained a range of corporate support functions. FSIM notes that the cyber-attack impacted FRV's progress against some Year Two to Five Plan actions either through deploying resources formerly allocated to an action to address IT issues or through direct impacts on action progress. FSIM has noted in individual action progress summaries where the cyber-attack impacted action delivery.

While FRV was able to continue delivering services, the cyber-attack significantly impacted on its ability to provide documentation to support FSIM's assessment against some actions. FSIM uses the terminology 'FRV advises' in instances where FRV has provided commentary on its progress against an action but could not provide supporting evidence due to the inability to access documentation.

Assurance principles

FSIM's assurance activities are guided internally by an adapted set of assurance principles outlined in Table 3. FSIM adapted the principles outlined in the Assurance Framework for Emergency Management⁵ to incorporate two additional principles of independence and transparency that reflect FSIM's functions. These principles guide FSIM's approach in delivering a consistent and coordinated assessment of CFA's, DJCS's and FRV's fire services reform program implementation.

Table 3: FSIM assurance principles

Principles	How FSIM applies assurance principles in its approach
Continuous improvement	FSIM appreciates and considers the complexity of the fire services in a rapidly changing context when assessing actions. FSIM values CFA and FRV in continuing to work together to deliver modern and sustainable fire services and keep Victorians safe.
Collaboration	Working together and organising assurance activities to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
Adding value	Maximising the potential benefits of assurance activities, including being proactive, risk-based, and reporting on the results of assurance activities in a way that is timely and can be easily understood by decision makers.
Reducing burden	Respecting and minimising the time and resources that agencies need to devote to assurance activities.
Independence	Conducting independent reviews to assess the evidence provided by CFA, DJCS and FRV.
Transparency	Supporting transparent reporting to the government and the community on the progress and effectiveness of delivery against the outcomes of the fire services reform.

⁵ Inspector General for Emergency Management, 2019, *Assurance Framework for Emergency Management*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.igem.vic.gov.au/publications/igem-reports/assurance-framework-for-emergency-management>>

3. Recommendations

FSIM makes recommendations under section 133 (f) of the FRV Act. FSIM makes recommendations when multiple findings and observations identify an opportunity to improve practice, address risks or adopt a more strategic approach. FSIM considers that recommendations made in this report should support agencies to realise the objectives of the Year Two to Five Plan and Victoria’s ten-year fire services reform program more broadly.

Year two recommendations progress

FSIM made four recommendations in the FSIM Annual Report 2021/22 that are fundamental to addressing key challenges to effective reform implementation. Observations on progress towards addressing these recommendations are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Progress observations on FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22 recommendations

Rec #	Title	Recommendation	Observations on progress since FY 2021-22
1	Complementary Fire Services	The Minister, in consultation with CFA, DJCS and FRV, should develop an agreed definition of complementary fire services, and how this translates to individual service delivery, underpinned by agreed principles to guide the finalisation of outstanding agreements.	CFA, DJCS and FRV have initiated positive and constructive action to address this recommendation. FSIM will continue to report progress on this recommendation, given the foundational impact of this recommendation on the reform.
2	Complementary Fire Services	The Minister should nominate an appropriately authorised, representative and accountable strategic governance body that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has authority to develop, endorse (and reinforce) detailed, definitive strategic foundational principles required to guide fire services sector-wide reform progress in line with broader emergency management principles and outcomes to ensure the community is provided with efficient and effective fire services addresses issues where there are broader, strategic, whole-of-government barriers to implementation (for example, the ability to drive legislative change to complete an outstanding service delivery agreement) oversees shared strategic programs of work or programs with significant implications for multiple agencies (for example, FRV’s Health Model, accreditation, or Firefighters Registration Board (FRB)) or where there are shared strategic accountabilities. 	In 2023, the Minister, through DJCS, established the SEC, comprising senior executive representation from CFA, DJCS and FRV. FSIM considers this governance group to be well-placed to address broader, strategic and whole-of-reform issues and opportunities. FSIM attends the SEC as an observer.

Rec #	Title	Recommendation	Observations on progress since FY 2021-22
3	All “in progress” actions	CFA and FRV should confirm relevant and appropriate performance measures to demonstrate progress of their Year Two to Five Plan actions towards their objectives.	CFA, DJCS and FRV have responded to this recommendation, providing performance measures for most Year Two to Five Plan actions. For future assessments, FSIM will seek performance measure data sets that are appropriate and relevant to assess the delivery of action objectives and, where required, seek further information from agencies to support effectiveness assessments in future years.
4	Fire services sustainability	<p>The Minister should request CFA, DJCS and FRV to convene a financial sustainability governance body to develop and agree on a project plan that clearly maps interdependent activities and key inputs (for example, initial funding plan actions, strategic workforce plan, CFA operating model, CFA seconded workforce capability and capacity requirements) impacting immediate (years three and four) and long-term funding requirements for CFA and FRV. This mechanism should discuss strategic fire services sustainability issues at a high level (excluding confidential financial data relevant to each individual agency) to understand and resolve strategic interdependent issues and identify opportunity for efficiencies.</p> <p>This plan could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery milestones and timeframes for completion of interdependent actions • identifying what agency is responsible for delivery oversight that enables monitoring of deliverables. <p>Bringing together these aspects (at a minimum) may provide an opportunity to identify opportunities for funding synergies across the fire services.</p>	<p>DJCS undertook analysis to identify the interdependencies between Year Two to Five Plan actions to further inform the review of fire services operational capability and capacity requirements (action 5.2). DJCS took into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the review of CFA’s Operating Model (action 1.7) • the exploration of operational and service delivery benefits of accreditation for FRV (action 2.2) • CFA’s capability and capacity requirements for staff seconded from FRV (action 5.1) • FRV’s strategic workforce requirements (action 5.4) • long-term funding plans for CFA and FRV (action 5.8). <p>FSIM understands that appropriate governance will be determined and overseen by SEC at the appropriate time. FSIM considers this established oversight arrangement will enable agencies to identify, understand and resolve strategic financial issues across the reform, given the significant interdependencies between actions.</p>

FSIM's recommendations for FY 2022-23

Much reform activity has been completed in the last three years. Where an agency solely controls the delivery of an implementation plan action in the Year Two to Five Plan, progress is clearly demonstrated. However, the last three years also provided insights into agencies' ability to progress joint actions. This is particularly evident where there are joint deliverables or substantial interdependencies with other implementation plan actions, such as actions 3.7, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 5.1 and 5.4.

To help Victoria's fire services agencies make the most of their progress so far, a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan and remaining implementation actions would be beneficial. This review should consider which remaining implementation plan activities most significantly contribute to the intended success at year five for each priority area and be updated with pragmatic and achievable timelines to focus on those activities. The review should be guided by the broader outcomes in the Fire Services Statement, leverage a shared definition of complementary fire services and consider the impacts of other enabling instruments (e.g., Secondment Agreement, legislation). Table 5 details FSIM's Annual Report 2022/23 recommendation to the Minister.

Table: 5: FSIM's Annual Report 2022/23 recommendation

Rec #	Title	Recommendation
5	Review of Year Two to Five Plan to more accurately reflect achievable timeframes and leverage three years of reform implementation knowledge and experiences	<p>Victorian Government, in close consultation with fire services agencies, should conduct a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan. This review should be informed by the practical implementation challenges to embedding reforms over the past three years, FSIM's observations, and be guided by the current Year Two to Five Plan success statements and the outcomes of the Fire Services Statement.</p> <p>The review should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver an updated implementation plan with achievable timeframes • focus on priority actions that will give measurable, demonstrable and practical effect to the government's commitments in the Fire Services Statement and the reform's vision of a modern fire services model for a safer Victoria • be guided by and leverage an agreed and shared definition of complementary fire services • determine areas for further improvement or development beyond Year Five, to inform the next phase of reform implementation beyond the Year Two to Five Plan. <p>This review should take advantage of the strengthened governance arrangements established in FY 2022-23.</p>

4. Potential barriers impacting reform implementation

This section outlines issues and risks arising from instruments that impact Fire Services Reform implementation, with many of these issues stemming from the secondment arrangements established by the reform.

FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 observed impacts

In FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, FSIM noted several process-related issues impacting secondees' ability to do their jobs effectively.⁶ To address these issues, FRV established a Secondment Management Department to support the management of FRV personnel seconded to CFA in the FY 2022-23. The department focused on supporting FRV seconded staff and maintaining governance and financial administration of matters relating to seconded staff.

FSIM notes that this Secondment Management Department has provided seconded staff with clarification on processes and procedures and addressed many individual secondee issues (e.g., pay issues, access to FRV policies and access to digital communications).

FSIM's FY 2022/23 observed impacts

This section comments on the external and reform-driven structural elements impacting Fire Services Reform implementation. Structural elements, such as the Secondment Agreement, have significantly impacted the fire services agencies' progress in delivering several implementation plan actions, particularly actions 3.9, 5.1 and 5.4 (and their interdependent actions). FSIM considers these actions fundamental to whether the reform will ultimately meet its stated outcomes to ensure "an effective and productive working relationship across the fire services and other emergency service agencies, building on the principle of interoperability" (Priority Three) and "ensuring the future sustainability of the fire services" (Priority Five).

FSIM provides this summary in anticipation of further assessment work in Year Four (FY 2023-24), where it will seek specific, verifiable, measurable and documented evidence from the agencies to assess and demonstrate the impact of these potential barriers on reform. With the benefit of three years of post-reform operational data and a better understanding of the unintended consequences of these structural elements, FSIM will be able to quantify the impact on effective service delivery and the community.

1. Legislative barriers

Various staff and assets were transferred from CFA to the newly established FRV as part of the Fire Services Reform. Agencies developed an Overarching Operational Services Agreement (OOSA), Service Level Deed of Agreements (SLDAs), and various supporting documents to set out how specific legislative obligations of the fire services would be performed. While agencies executed the overarching documents, further work was required by agencies to operationalise the arrangements agreed in the OOSA and SLDAs.

Under the current legislative arrangements, CFA is unable to delegate end-to-end responsibility for three of the six SLDAs. Change to several legislative instruments is required to enable clear end-to-end service delivery as envisaged by the transfer of functions and staff to FRV at the initiation of the reform. These legislative issues apply to functions relating to dangerous goods, land use planning and caravan parks in the CAoV. FSIM notes more specific service delivery impacts relating to legislative barriers in actions 3.9 and 3.10, but broadly, FSIM has observed a declining trend in the time taken for referrals for these services since the establishment of reform, largely due to the current shared workarounds between agencies (i.e., FRV delivering services with CFA providing final assessment and sign-off).

⁶Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 21 September 2023, <<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/FSIM-Annual-Report-2021-22.pdf>>, pg.7.

2. Secondment Agreement and the Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020

On 31 October 2020, CFA and FRV executed the Secondment Agreement, a core agreement underpinning the Fire Services Reform. The Secondment Agreement outlines arrangements to make FRV operational staff available to CFA to provide operational and management support to volunteers. The Secondment Agreement specifies minimum staffing levels agreed to between CFA and FRV and lists the rank, position number and location of the five classifications of FRV operational staff that are seconded to CFA. These classifications comprised 45 ACFOs, 96 Commanders, 53 Instructors, eight PAD Supervisors, and 21 PAD Operators. Secondees are employed by FRV and are governed by the employment conditions of their relevant Enterprise Agreement (EA) and when seconded to CFA, their work is under the command and control of the CO, CFA.

Five implementation plan actions are directly impacted by the intersection between the secondment model and the FRV Operational EA; all focus on firefighter capability. The actions impacted are noted in Table 6, and further details of the specific impacts are available at each action summary.

Table 6: Actions with interdependencies with Secondment Model and the Fire Rescue Victorian Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020

Action Lead	Action
CFA	Action 3.8: CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements.
CFA and FRV	Action 3.9 ⁷ : Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.
FRB	Action 4.2: Establish capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the firefighters register, application processes and transparent appeals processes.
CFA	Action 5.1: CFA in consultation with FRV develops and maintain a secondment strategy that details CFA's capability and capacity needs for those resources sourced from FRV.
FRV	Action 5.4: Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.

2.1. Performance and misconduct management under the Secondment Agreement

The Secondment Agreement specifies that *"the Chief Officer of CFA has the order and control of the work of all secondees who are made available to CFA under this Agreement. The parties agree that all secondees will implement command and control arrangements at the direction of the Chief Officer of CFA"*.⁸ It makes no specific provisions regarding seconded performance standards and the day-to-day management of seconded performance, only that there must be a fair and equitable process for ending a secondment. The performance and misconduct management of FRV employees, including secondees, is covered under the provisions of the FRV Operational EA.

FSIM observes that this situation limits CFA's ability to be apprised of, investigate, and resolve matters relating to performance, occupational health and safety or disciplinary issues relating to personnel working in CFA in a seconded role. FSIM further observes that the relevant supplementary instrument to the Secondment Agreement (Performance and misconduct management) that could provide additional clarity and guidance is not yet complete and unlikely to be settled in the near future due to intersections between the Secondment Agreement, the FRV Act and the relevant EAs, and is also noted in CFA's Capability Statement.

⁷ FSIM notes that CFA and FRV interpret the scope of this action differently. CFA includes the progress of Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments in reporting against this action whereas FRV does not. This issue is further detailed in Action 3.9.

⁸ CFA/FRV Secondment Agreement, section 7(a)

2.2. Appointing secondees under the Secondment Agreement

FSIM observed that under the Secondment Agreement, the CO, CFA has no formal input as to which FRV employees fill seconded positions and limited visibility of incoming secondees' capabilities. FRV advised that this is due to privacy obligations. Further, FSIM observes that the relevant supplementary instrument to the Secondment Agreement (Vacancy management), which would provide clarity for all parties in applying relevant secondment requirements, is not complete and not likely to be settled in the short term due to intersections between the Secondment Agreement, the FRV Act, the relevant EAs, and CFA's capability requirements. Establishing the FRB and delivery of outcomes of action 4.2 will assist the CO, CFA to have visibility and potential input into the capabilities of secondees, however completion of this action is still some time away (December 2024).

2.3. Command and control of secondees

FSIM notes that the Secondment Agreement requires that any work, duties, or roles performed by secondees must only be work, duties, or roles covered by the relevant EA⁹; however, the CO, CFA has the order and control of the work of all secondees. FSIM considers this arrangement may have the potential to cause a conflict or issue. For example, the CO, CFA may require a secondee to attend out-of-hours meetings or other activities to support a brigade, however the approval to undertake overtime is required from FRV. There is further work to do in Year Four to understand the interaction and any measurable impact between this power in the Secondment Agreement and the application of the FRV Operational EA requirements for secondee roles.

2.4. Review of the Secondment Agreement

Section 12 of the Secondment Agreement provides for a review of the operation and effectiveness of the secondment arrangements by 31 October 2021.¹⁰ Agencies did not undertake this review as the arrangements were in their infancy. As noted above, the Secondment Agreement is at the core of the reform, and FSIM considers that many of the issues raised above could inform such a review, with the benefit of the knowledge of the practical implementation issues caused by this structural reform element. CFA and FRV have indicated their support of a review of the Secondment Agreement, however FSIM is not aware of any action to initiate a review at the end of the reporting period.

3. Agency application of agreed consultation workflow

CFA and FRV undertake consultation activities to develop and finalise SLDA schedules and Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments. For decisions impacting the terms and conditions of FRV employees, under the FRV Operational EA, FRV is obligated to consult and reach consensus with the United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch (UFU) before implementing SLDA schedules and Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments.¹¹

These consultation activities occur between stakeholders in a range of ways:


- CFA with FRV: agencies working together at the officer level to determine a draft in-principle position
- FRV with UFU via Consultative Committee working groups: FRV presenting CFA/FRV agreed in principle position to a relevant working group of the Consultative Committee for discussion and negotiation
- FRV and CFA: agencies working together to discuss working group feedback and establishing a final agreed in-principle position for HoA endorsement
- FRV with Consultative Committee: FRV presenting the final CFA/FRV agreed position to the Consultative Committee, seeking consensus on that position before implementation.

As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, these consultation processes contributed to delays in finalising some arrangements. These arrangements continue to present a considerable challenge for

⁹ CFA/FRV Secondment Agreement, section 3.2

¹⁰ CFA/FRV Secondment Agreement, section 12(a)

¹¹ *Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020*, section 16.



agencies in committing to positions agreed in principle at the executive level, where there is a subsequent requirement to consult with the UFU and reach an agreement with those positions.

To clearly define the consultation processes between agencies and with the UFU, CFA and FRV in FY 2022-23 developed a workflow to outline the approval process for SLDA schedules and Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments. This workflow was approved at an HoA meeting in April 2023. Additional detail on the consultation workflow is available at action 3.9.

FSIM supports CFA and FRV efforts to provide greater clarity and transparency on consultation and the broader approval process. FSIM also notes additional clarity between agencies within the steps of this process – particularly the ‘Key Stakeholder Engagement’ step – would likely help address delays and provide CFA assurance that FRV is advocating on behalf of the agency-agreed position. Greater clarity throughout the workflow is helpful for successfully delivering supplementary instruments and schedules and should support effective collaboration between agencies.

5. Year Three reported action status

The Year Two to Five Plan sets out 41 actions to be delivered between November 2021 and December 2025 across five priority areas. 'Action status' is reported by the lead agency against the Year Two to Five Plan. Given the changes to action completion dates in the implementation plan from Year Two to Year Three, comparisons of action statuses between years should not be made.

Agencies reported that 15 actions were completed as at 30 June 2023:

- actions 1.2 and 1.5 within the Priority One workstream
- actions 2.1 and 2.2 within the Priority Two workstream
- actions 3.5, 3.7, 3.10 and 3.11 within the Priority Three workstream
- actions 4.4, 4.8 and 4.10 within the Priority Four workstream
- actions 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 within the Priority Five workstream.

Of the remaining 26 actions, as at 30 June 2023, agencies reported that:

- ten are "in progress - on track"
- eight are "in progress - minor delays"
- five are in "progress - significant delays"
- three have "not commenced".

FSIM notes that four actions (actions 2.3, 3.6, 4.6 and 5.1) did not meet their completion date detailed in the Year Two to Five Plan at the end of the reporting period.

Table 7 provides the agency-agreed definitions for the status of actions.

Table 7: Government implementation status definitions¹²

Status	DJCS progress assessment definitions
Completed	Action is finished and formally acquitted through completion and signing of the acquittal form.
In progress – On track	Action has commenced and is tracking to be completed by the 'completion date' as per the Year Two to Five Plan.
In progress – Minor delays	Action has commenced and is experiencing minor delays that may impact delivery by the 'completion date' as per the Year Two to Five Plan.
In progress – Significant delays	Action has commenced and is experiencing significant delays and it is highly unlikely that the 'completion date' as per the Year Two to Five Plan will be met.
Not commenced	Action has not yet commenced.

¹² Status definitions as per Year Two to Five Plan status report as at 30 June 2023.

Figure 2 provides the status of all Year Two to Five Plan actions, as at 30 June 2023.

Figure 2: Status of Year Two to Five Plan actions

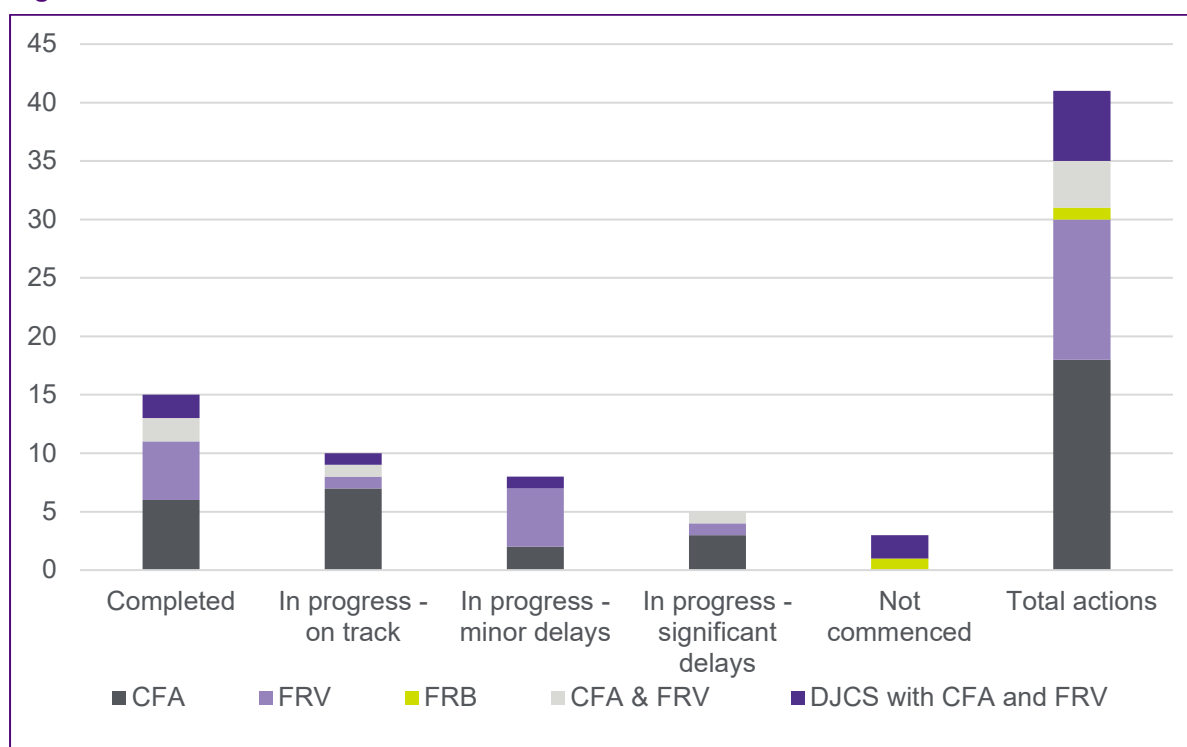


Table 8 shows the status of all actions in the Year Two to Five Plan as at 30 June 2023, based on the progress updates from CFA, DJCS and FRV.

Table 8: Agency reported status of Year Two to Five Plan actions as at 30 June 2023

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
Priority One: STRENGTHEN CFA AS A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTING AGENCY			
1.1	Lead: CFA – Develop and implement CFA’s Engagement Framework and Volunteer Engagement Plan incorporating a monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement process.	In progress - on track	June 2025
1.2	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program.	Completed	June 2025
1.3	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the \$22.7m Volunteer Support Package (VSP).	In progress – minor delays	June 2024
1.4	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the \$3.3m crew and strike team leader project.	In progress – on track	June 2024
1.5	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the connected brigades project (part of \$3.6 million program to enhance critical volunteer facing ICT systems).	Completed	June 2023
1.6	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the \$7.65m Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers project.	In progress – on track	June 2025
1.7	Lead: CFA – Review CFA’s brigade operating model to ensure brigades are appropriately structured and provided with the required capabilities to deliver contemporary services that meet community expectations and needs.	In progress – on track	June 2025

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
Priority Two: STRENGTHEN FRV AS A CAREER FIREFIGHTING AGENCY			
2.1	Lead: FRV – Commence Phase Two of the operational communications rollout, including upgrades to station turn out equipment in FRV stations.	Completed	June 2023
2.2	Lead: FRV – Explore the operational and service delivery benefits of accreditation for FRV within the Victorian emergency management response model and provide options to government on the accreditation process.	Completed	June 2023
2.3	Lead: FRV – Develop and implement a contemporary Health Model, which establishes state-wide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms that are designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to our firefighters and corporate staff.	In progress – minor delays	June 2023
2.4	Lead: FRV – Finalise relevant enterprise bargaining agreements, including the FRV Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement; FRV Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement; FRV Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement; and FRV Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement.	In progress – minor delays	June 2024
Priority Three: PLAN AND BUILD FOR THE FUTURE			
3.1	Lead: FRV – Develop and implement FRV Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, ICT Roadmap and Target Future Operating Model.	In progress – on track	June 2025
3.2	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the \$48.2 million fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.	In progress – significant delays	June 2025
3.3	Lead: CFA – Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV.	In progress – minor delays	December 2024
3.4	Lead: FRV – FRV, in consultation with CFA, deliver agreed capital works to enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades.	In progress – minor delays	June 2025
3.5	Lead: CFA – CFA to complete delivery of agreed capital works projects on behalf of FRV.	Completed	June 2023
3.6	Lead: FRV – Rollout of the FRV Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) ensembles as part of the PPC project.	In progress – minor delays	June 2023
3.7	Lead: CFA and FRV – Agencies mature existing joint governance arrangements that support the implementation of the program and ongoing development of interoperability procedures and arrangements.	Completed	June 2023
3.8	Lead: CFA – CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and Jun 2022 requirements.	In progress – on track	August 2023
3.9	Lead: CFA and FRV – Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.	In progress – significant delays	June 2024

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
3.10	Lead: CFA – Where practical and appropriate, finalise any delegation authorisations between CFA and FRV to support the operationalisation of the Service Level Deeds of Agreement (SLDA) and schedules.	Completed	June 2023
3.11	Lead: CFA – CFA to ensure internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the SLDA and schedules.	Completed	June 2024
3.12	Lead: CFA and FRV – Finalise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalise ongoing support service requirements.	In progress – on track	June 2025
Priority Four: VALUING OUR PEOPLE			
4.1	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Appoint the Firefighters Registration Board (FRB).	In progress – minor delays	August 2023
4.2	Lead: FRB – Establish capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the firefighters register, application processes and transparent appeals processes.	Not commenced	December 2024
4.3	Lead: CFA – Complete delivery of the volunteer’s health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project.	In progress – significant delays	June 2024
4.4	Lead: FRV – Define FRV values and culture and deliver supporting programs of work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FRV values • Strategy to embed FRV values • Leadership development and capability. 	Completed	June 2023
4.5	Lead: CFA – Continue delivering the following cultural and diversity change programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA behavioural standards program • CFA child safety compliance plan • Inclusion & diversity strategy and supporting action plans • Fire Services Statement funded Initiatives. 	In progress – on track	June 2024
4.6	Lead: FRV – Develop and continue delivering on inclusion and diversity initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan • Gender Equity Action Plan • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan. 	In progress – significant delays	March 2023
4.7	Lead: CFA – Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models.	In progress – on track	February 2025
4.8	Lead: CFA and FRV – Identify new opportunities to recognise and value the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters to delivering fire services (e.g. communications and collaboration).	Completed	June 2023
4.9	Lead: FRV – Demonstrate progress towards reaching the government’s commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV.	In progress – minor delays	December 2025
4.10	Lead: CFA – Support diversity and inclusion in CFA and make progress towards delivering on the commitment to increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent.	Completed	June 2025

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
Priority Five: ENSURE THE FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FIRE SERVICES			
5.1	Lead: CFA – CFA in consultation with FRV develops and maintain a secondment strategy that details CFA's capability and capacity needs for those resources sourced from FRV.	In progress – significant delays	June 2023
5.2	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Undertake a review of operational capability and capacity requirements to meet the future needs of fire services across Victoria to inform future funding plans.	In progress – on track	November 2024
5.3	Lead: FRV – Develop an FRV Strategy.	Completed	September 2022
5.4	Lead: FRV – Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.	Completed	March 2023
5.5	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Conduct an initial financial sustainability assessment of FRV and CFA.	Completed	December 2021
5.6	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Develop an initial funding plan that addresses high priority funding requirements for CFA and FRV in years three and four of the Fire Services Reform and addresses the impact of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transfers of functions, resources and assets between CFA and FRV the change to the FRV fire district upon the fire services property levy revenue base after the commencing day any changes to the differential rates of the fire services property levy after the commencing day. 	Completed	December 2021
5.7	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Conduct a financial sustainability assessment update of FRV and CFA, based on three years operation of the new fire services model.	Not commenced	December 2024
5.8	Lead: DJCS with CFA and FRV – Develop a long-term funding plan for CFA and FRV for Year five and beyond.	Not commenced	June 2025

6. Monitoring progress of actions

The following sections provide progress summaries and relevant findings for actions under each Year Two to Five Plan Priority Area.

6.1 Priority One actions

Context

Priority One of the Year Two to Five Plan contains seven actions with the shared outcome of “Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighting organisation”. The following section provides a progress summary for each Priority One action.

Progress of actions

Action 1.1: Develop and implement CFA’s Engagement Framework and Volunteer Engagement Plan incorporating a monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement process.

Action objective: CFA’s Engagement Framework and Volunteer Engagement Plan is developed, implemented and remains fit for purpose.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to develop and implement the CFA Engagement Framework – a strategic overarching document that will set the foundations for how CFA engages with its stakeholders. The CFA Engagement Framework is central to CFA’s successful delivery of its mission, vision and strategy. This framework also includes a Volunteer Engagement Plan, Staff Engagement Plan, CFA Community Engagement Approach and Stakeholder Engagement Approach. The CFA Engagement Framework and associated plans and approaches will be implemented into CFA organisational practice and will have embedded monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement processes by June 2025.

Progress summary

CFA provided evidence to confirm the progress of the CFA Engagement Framework and its associated plans and approaches. The Victorian Government Public Engagement Framework 2021-2025 informs this work.¹³

FSIM notes that CFA is a large organisation with many stakeholders that span Victoria and nationally. Developing tailored stakeholder engagement approaches and plans informed by consistent engagement principles will provide guidelines CFA members can use to prepare, manage, monitor and evaluate fit-for-purpose engagement initiatives. This guideline development is an important piece of work that has the potential to improve outcomes for CFA and the broader community by bringing volunteers, staff, external stakeholders and the community into the CFA decision-making process.

As at 30 June 2023, the progress of the CFA Engagement Framework, associated plans and approaches are as follows:

¹³ Victorian Government, 2021, *Public Engagement Framework 2021-2025*, Department of Premiere and Cabinet, viewed 25 May 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/public-engagement-framework-2021-2025>>

1. CFA Engagement Framework

The CFA Engagement Framework is in draft form. Further work will be required to complete the framework, including stakeholder consultation and CFA executive approval.

2. CFA Volunteer Engagement Plan

The CFA Volunteer Engagement Plan is in draft form and on track for completion by June 2025. At the end of the reporting period, CFA was engaging with volunteers and the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) and will continue to consult to develop the plan.

3. CFA Community Engagement Approach

The CFA Community Engagement Approach is complete and published on the CFA website.¹⁴ This approach demonstrates CFA's capability and commitment to engage with local communities and empower them to prepare for fire. To develop this approach, CFA has consulted with external stakeholders to identify how CFA can work with community members, government, corporate and other emergency management sector agencies. CFA's engagement approach includes but is not limited to, public awareness campaigns and fire safety programs.

4. CFA Stakeholder Engagement Plan/Approach and Staff Engagement Plan

CFA has yet to develop the CFA Stakeholder Engagement Plan/Approach and Staff Engagement Plan.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.1 is progressing, noting that the CFA Community Engagement Approach is complete and published on the CFA website.

¹⁴ Country Fire Authority, 2022, *Community Engagement Approach*, Country Fire Authority, viewed 25 May 2023, <<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/community-engagement-approach#:~:text=CFA's%20Community%20Engagement%20Approach%20outlines,them%20to%20prepare%20for%20fire>>

Action 1.2: Complete delivery of the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program.

Action objective: CFA's Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program is fit for purpose, supporting a capable and sustainable volunteer workforce.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to develop and deliver the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program. CFA recognises that volunteer recruitment and retention are critical to fulfil its mission of protecting life and property in the CAoV. To complete this action, CFA must deliver the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program, including research and development of approaches and activities to support volunteer recruitment, retention, re-engagement and recognition. The CFA Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program encompasses the following projects:

1. Volunteer Recruitment Hub
2. Volunteer Knowledge Sharing Platform
3. Information for Families Guide
4. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Toolkit
5. CFA Digital Library
6. Regional base projects.

Progress summary

CFA reported this action as completed and acquitted in October 2022. All CFA Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program deliverables have transitioned to BAU. CFA will continue exploring opportunities for future improvements. FSIM received evidence demonstrating that CFA has implemented tools, resources, and regional-based projects under this program, developed in consultation with CFA members and the VFBV.

1. Volunteer Recruitment Hub

The publicly accessible [Volunteer Recruitment Hub](#) is an end-to-end online onboarding platform for volunteer recruitment and volunteer transfers between CFA brigades.

2. Volunteer Knowledge Sharing Platform

The Volunteer Knowledge Sharing Platform is an online portal for CFA volunteers and brigades to share experiences, ideas, and achievements across Victoria. Initially released in 2019 as part of the reform, the Volunteer Knowledge Sharing Platform has been updated with increased functionality and accessibility and is available via CFA Members Online, CFA's internal members online platform.

3. CFA Information for Families Guide

The publicly accessible [CFA Information for Families Guide](#) is designed to inform volunteer family members and caregivers about volunteering with CFA, focusing on the impact volunteering may have on individuals and their families. The guide is sent to all new CFA members.

4. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Toolkit

CFA redesigned the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Toolkit from a paper-based guide to be accessible online via the CFA Members Online. The toolkits provide CFA brigades with detailed information, plans and templates for each volunteer recruitment and retention phase.

5. CFA Digital Library

The publicly available [CFA Digital Library](#) is an online image storage platform intended to assist brigades showcase their activities and CFA's diverse membership through a large database of images. Brigades can use these images in bespoke recruitment, retention and educational activities.

6. Regional based projects

CFA delivered 44 regionally-based projects and activities over five CFA regions. CFA targeted these projects to support volunteer recruitment, retention, recognition, and re-engagement. These projects have been implemented and driven by individual brigades and districts, and include:

- training and knowledge-sharing forums,
- brigade open days,
- the establishment of women's networking groups and
- recruitment initiatives.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.2 is implemented. FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Action 1.3: Complete delivery of the \$22.7m Volunteer Support Package (VSP).

Action objective: CFA volunteers are supported in their endeavours to build capability, deliver services and have access to a range of practical support programs.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2024	June 2024	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires CFA to complete and deliver the Volunteer Support Package (VSP). The VSP enables CFA to enhance and improve existing volunteer experiences and develop new approaches to make positive, meaningful and transformative changes to the volunteer experience. The VSP comprises four projects, which CFA considers will deliver tangible benefits for volunteers, such as improving and enhancing volunteer support and arrangements. The VSP includes the following projects:

1. CFA Pocket Book
2. Brigade Capability Review
3. CFA Volunteer Workwear
4. Digital Stores Project.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA was progressing delivery of the VSP. This project has the potential to provide greater insights into brigade capability, contribute to efficiencies and reduce administrative burden for CFA and volunteers through digital solutions. The VSP will also take symbolic and practical steps to contribute to a CFA culture of belonging through investing in branded workwear.

The progress of the VSP projects as at 30 June 2023 is outlined below.

1. CFA Pocket Book

The scope of the CFA Pocket Book is to deliver a digital application that CFA members can access via smart devices such as smartphones and tablets. The CFA Pocket Book will include digitised copies of CFA documentation such as, but not limited to, Standard Operating Procedures, Standing Orders, Brigade Management Manuals, Operational Bulletins, Safety Bulletins and operational calculators and converters for use in the field. The CFA Pocket Book enables members to access key operational materials without internet connectivity as CFA members will, at times, operate in areas with limited to no internet access.


Throughout FY 2022-23, CFA has experienced difficulties sourcing staff to deliver the project. CFA has engaged an external software provider to scope the CFA Pocket Book. The CFA Pocketbook is due for completion by December 2023.

2. Brigade Capability Review

The Brigade Capability Review project aims to modernise the CFA brigade inspection process and provide CFA with access to data that informs strategic planning considering capabilities, performance, and future requirements. The Baseline Capability Profiling Application, a deliverable of the Brigade Capability Review, has been live since April 2023. The Baseline Capability Profiling Application is a planning decision-support tool, providing CFA with baseline capability requirements by brigade. This application enables CFA to assess brigade capability gaps, provides information on activity causation and calculates impact trends over time. It can also provide information on demographics, land-use and community characteristics that influence brigade capability. CFA is currently undertaking a project completion review before the project transitions to BAU.

3. CFA Volunteer Workwear

The CFA Volunteer Workwear project was expanded with additional funding sources from the *Capability Measures Program*. This workwear project addresses volunteer needs for branded workwear while carrying out non-firefighting responsibilities where PPC is not required.



These responsibilities include community education programs, working in an incident management team, attending meetings, and performing duties on station or training activities.

COVID-19 supply chain disruptions impacted the progress of the CFA Volunteer Workwear project by affecting the manufacturers' ability to produce and supply workwear to CFA.

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported delivery of 7,500 VSP-funded volunteer workwear sets.

4. Digital Stores Project

CFA's Digital Stores Project aims to develop a digital procurement tool that provides an end-to-end electronic ordering system for brigades, district mechanical officers, and training grounds. The intended project outcome is to improve efficiency for CFA members when managing and ordering supplies. This system provides users with online information on supply availability and estimated delivery times, reducing the administrative burden on volunteers and replacing a paper-based procurement process.

The Digital Stores Project is in progress. The work undertaken identified requirements, including finance system design and mapping procurement processes. The project team is currently exploring software solution options, which will determine project timeframes going forward.

FSIM has received evidence that each of the VSP projects is governed by individual steering committees and CFA members are engaged to contribute to the design and development of these projects.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.3 is progressing.

Action 1.4: Complete delivery of the \$3.3m crew and strike team leader project.

Action objective: CFA's crew and strike team leader training programs remain fit for purpose, enabling crew and strike team leaders to meet their roles and responsibilities.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2024	June 2024	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to review and update the Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader training programs. These leaders represent the frontline of bushfire and grassfire response.

This action ensures Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader training programs remain fit for purpose and enhance Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader skills through coordinated training exercises, targeted coaching and mentoring opportunities. CFA, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), applies national enterprise competency standards to Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader courses. Training will be delivered via online and face-to-face formats.

Progress summary

This action is on track for completion by June 2024.

As at 30 June 2023, CFA has progressed the review and update of Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader training programs. CFA Operational Doctrine and Training Steering Committee governs the Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader training programs. CFA regularly engages with the VFBV and the Joint CFA/VFBV Training Committee to ensure the training needs of volunteers are understood and met.

CFA reported that the Crew Leader training program is in final consultation and endorsed by the Joint CFA/VFBV Training Committee. CFA revised the Strike Team Leader training program against enterprise skill sets and scheduled the program for consultation in July 2023.

Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader are also given opportunities to further develop their capabilities to assume control of emergency responses, such as (but not limited to) attending pilot leadership training courses facilitated by the Australian Institute of Police Management, and 22 participants were confirmed to attend the New South Wales Rural Fire Service academy to participate in a multi-sector group leader course in August 2023.

FSIM notes that action 1.4 has interdependencies to action 1.7 (review of CFA's Operating Model). The Crew Leader and Strike Team Leader training programs support the CFA Operating Model –Training Enhancement Program to meet the needs of volunteers and the community, which is a high priority for CFA.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.4 is progressing.

Action 1.5: Complete delivery of the connected brigades project (part of \$3.6 million program to enhance critical volunteer facing ICT systems).

Action objective: CFA's ICT systems are fit for purpose and ensure brigades have the capability and capacity required to deliver contemporary services that meet community expectations and needs.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to complete and deliver the Connected Brigades Project. This project aims to provide secure and standard internet service to CFA Brigades to support online training and improve communication between brigades, regions, districts and headquarters.

The Connected Brigades Project was rolled over from the *Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan* to the Year Two to Five Plan because the contractor could not complete installations due to COVID-19 related disruptions and other technical issues.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form.

Out of the total 1,211 CFA brigades, 1,038 brigades initially opted in for the Connect Brigades Project and received connectivity in 2022. CFA undertook further consultation with brigades in 2022. An additional 115 brigades opted in, and 110 were subsequently connected. A contracted telecommunications provider supports ongoing internet connectivity. As at 30 June 2023, 58 brigades had not opted into the program. CFA reported that brigades that did not opt into the program indicated that they would not utilise internet services, some stations were not connected to power, nor had sufficient network access in the CAoV.

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported that further work is required to review the viability of satellite connection for the remaining brigades. CFA is exploring the viability of satellite connectivity for sites unable to be connected by fixed line or 4G connections.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.5 is implemented with 1,148 brigades receiving internet connectivity as at 30 June 2023. FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Action 1.6: Complete delivery of the \$7.65m Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers project.

Action objective: CFA's training program for new operational members is fit for purpose, preparing and supporting members to safely meet their role and responsibilities.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to deliver the Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers Project. This project includes a range of initiatives, including training new volunteers through the General Fire Fighters (GFF) course. In 2021, CFA replaced their minimum skills Wildfire Course for new operational members with the GFF course. The GFF course ensures new operational members develop the essential knowledge and skills to participate safely and effectively at turnouts under supervision. The available funding is sufficient to provide up to 4,000 wildfire PPC sets to new members upon GFF course completion. The project also includes activities to equip Volunteer Trainers and Assessors (VTA) with sufficient skills and resources to train new volunteers to keep them safe and effective on the fireground.

Progress summary

CFA has provided evidence to confirm the progress of the Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers Project, outlined below:

1. General Fire Fighters course

As at 30 June 2023, 3,283 CFA members have completed the GFF course since 2021. 1,237 CFA members completed the GFF course in FY 2022-23. At the time of reporting, 3,528 were progressing through the course. COVID-19 restrictions on face-to-face training have impacted course delivery in FY 2020-21 and 2021-22. Consequently, CFA did not meet the target of 8,000 volunteers completing the course by June 2023.

At the time of reporting, CFA was reviewing the GFF course to ensure continuous improvement. CFA has employed program designers and officers to undertake course unit benchmarking and review the course from a compliance and usability perspective. In the process, CFA consulted with VFBV, course participants and VTAs for feedback on the course materials. The outcomes of this review identified that major changes were required to update the course so that it is fit for purpose. These changes include audio-visual content, course assessment approaches, learning management system usability, and further embedding continuous improvement processes. This work will continue throughout FY 2023-24. As of 30 June 2023, CFA reported that it had issued wildfire PPC to over 3,600 members.

FSIM notes that identifying and implementing improvements to the GFF course demonstrates alignment with CFA's Operating Model (action 1.7) outcome of making training improvements to better meet the needs of volunteers and the community.

2. Volunteer Trainer and Assessor training and development

263 VTAs have completed training as at 30 June 2023. Training for VTAs is ongoing. VTA professional development opportunities, such as courses in complaints handling and assessment principles, continue to be made available each month.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.6 is progressing.

Action 1.7: Review CFA’s brigade operating model to ensure brigades are appropriately structured and provided with the required capabilities to deliver contemporary services that meet community expectations and needs.

Action objective: CFA’s brigade and group operating model remains fit for purpose to enable the delivery of capabilities that meet community needs.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to review its brigade operating model to ensure it remains fit for purposes to ensure CFA has the capabilities and capacity to deliver contemporary services that meet community expectations and needs. CFA determined to expand the original scope of the action (a brigade operating model review) to a much broader review of the organisation’s operating model.

CFA consulted with volunteers in 2022 to develop a comprehensive, six-year program of work to build a contemporary organisation. The operating model review covers all aspects of CFA’s service delivery approaches including, structure, governance, and accountabilities; systems and processes; people and skills; partners and co-producers; equipment and location; and culture and leadership.

Progress summary

The CFA Board endorsed the Operating Model Program in March 2023. This program comprises a six-year roadmap of 29 initiatives to modernise the organisation. CFA consulted key external stakeholders, DJCS, FRV, FSIM, and VFBV to develop the program.

The Operating Model Program focuses on how CFA delivers services (under the CFA Operating Model) that inform CFA’s ongoing vision and strategy, as well as CFA’s business model that enables operational service delivery in the CAoV. The program contains a suite of guiding implementation principles and outlines initiatives to enhance volunteer roles, strengthen brigades, and improve operational performance. The CFA Executive is accountable to the Board for the overall delivery and outcomes of the program.

CFA has identified the first tranche of initiatives for FY 2023-24 and is in the process of project initiation. The program of initiatives for year one addresses operational challenges under the following themes:


- Service delivery tiers, offerings, standards, and roles and responsibilities
- Organisational, Role and Function Review
- Volunteer membership model
- Training Enhancement Program
- Policy, processes and doctrine.

CFA advises that it continues to consult with its members, staff, and stakeholders including VFBV, DJCS, FRV, Forest Fire Management Victoria and State Emergency Services, as this work progresses. This program provides further opportunities for CFA to work with the emergency services sector, community partners and stakeholders in shaping the delivery of services.

Findings

FSIM finds action 1.7 is progressing.

FSIM notes that the CFA Operating Model is an essential mechanism to enable CFA to adapt and improve its operating practices, given the significant changes brought about by the reform. CFA are undertaking this work to employ new strategies to build the appropriate operational capacity and attract diverse volunteers. CFA has identified the need to diversify its volunteer base and attract new members while retaining and supporting current members. CFA has also highlighted risks associated with an



ageing volunteer workforce and challenges in retaining the knowledge, leadership, and skills they possess.

This action has a key interdependency with Year Two to Five Plan action 5.1, for CFA to develop a secondment strategy outlining CFA's capability and capacity needs. To deliver action 5.1, CFA prepared a Capability Statement, which it intends to update annually. CFA plans to incorporate any changes arising from work on the operating model into the CFA Capability Statement over time.

FSIM notes that action 1.7 provides the framework and delivery program to acquit action 4.7. In addition, this action has also interdependencies with Year Two to Five Plan actions:

- Action 5.2: Review of fire services sector operational capability and capacity requirements.
- Action 5.4: FRV Strategic Workforce Plan with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.
- Action 5.7: Financial sustainability assessment update of CFA and FRV.
- Action 5.8: Long-term funding plan for CFA and FRV.

6.2 Priority two actions

Context

Priority Two of the Year Two to Five Plan contains four actions with the shared outcome of “Strengthen FRV as a career firefighting agency”. The following section provides a progress summary for each Priority Two action.

Progress of actions

Action 2.1: Commence Phase Two of the operational communications rollout, including upgrades to station turn out equipment in FRV stations.

Action objective: Upgrades to FRV operational communications support system enhancements and standardise equipment.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires FRV to undertake a series of upgrades to harmonise operational communications across all FRV stations, including the 37 former CFA integrated stations transferred to FRV.¹⁵ The action comprises four streams of work:

- the installation of station turnout and related equipment
- station fit-out and joinery to support upgrades
- upgrades to software
- the execution of contracts for communication links for co-located stations.

This action is phase two of FRV’s broader Communications Program. FRV advised that incomplete Phase Two activities will be rolled over to Phase Three of the Communications Program.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. At the end of the reporting period, FRV had ensured network connectivity and completed the STO system rollout to co-located stations, amended ICT applications to accommodate additional stations, and rolled out multi-function devices and STO colour printers to all FRV stations. In addition, FRV had commenced work to upgrade station IT equipment, undertake STO enhancements, roll out optical fibre/wavelength to all stations, and design, build and test new WIFI solutions for fire stations and public events. FRV will roll the completion of these programs of work into phase three of the Communications Program. FRV established a Turnout Systems Working Party to implement the action, and a Project Control Group (with FRV Executive Leadership Team (ELT) membership) oversees the project. FRV advises that the cyber-attack in December 2022 delayed the delivery of this action. FRV was required to switch off the STO equipment that it had installed to respond to the attack. At the end of the reporting period, STO system had not yet been restored. However, once systems are back online, the project team plans to return to stations to test equipment and ensure the upgrades work as intended.

Findings

FSIM finds action 2.1 is partially implemented. FSIM notes core deliverables for the action, including software application enhancements and rollout of STO to regional stations have been implemented as at 30 June 2023, while the optical fibre communications links are to be rolled-out to stations over two years. FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

¹⁵ 37 stations were transferred with one station (Lara) tenanted by FRV but owned by CFA.

Action 2.2: Explore the operational and service delivery benefits of accreditation for FRV within the Victorian emergency management response model and provide options to government on the accreditation process.

Action objective: FRV's service delivery aligns with community expectations, enhancing public confidence and operational efficiency, and is founded on a platform of continuous improvement.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires FRV to explore the operational service delivery benefits of becoming an accredited fire service agency with a national or international accreditation body and provide options to government on the accreditation process.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. At the end of the reporting period, FRV had submitted an options paper on accreditation models to inform service delivery planning and continuous quality improvement at FRV to the Minister.

FRV prepared an options paper that identifies the needs, benefits and relevance of service planning and considers four accreditation models, including the advantages and disadvantages of each model, considered accreditation within the context of the Victorian emergency management response model, and provided options to government on the accreditation process.

In the options paper, FRV identified a preferred accreditation framework (Commission on Fire Accreditation International). A decision to submit for accreditation will only be made in consultation with government and FRV service delivery partners once FRV has completed a cycle of service delivery planning and continuous quality improvement.

Findings

FSIM finds action 2.2 has been implemented. FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Action 2.3: Develop and implement a contemporary Health Model, which establishes state-wide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms that are designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to our firefighters and corporate staff.

Action objective: FRV employees are supported by a coherent fit-for-purpose Health Model designed, endorsed by Executive Leadership Team and implemented organisation-wide.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires FRV to deliver and implement a health model that is fit-for-purpose and incorporates health and safety standards, policies and support mechanisms that manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the quality of care for FRV staff.

A successful FRV Health Model will support the following outcomes:

- personalised care
- physically and psychologically prepared recruits
- minimised health risk
- injury prevention
- legislative compliant systems
- confidence to manage ongoing health needs
- foster a safe and respected workforce.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported that this action is in progress with minor delays.

FRV has created and updated internal processes and procedures (such as creating business rules to integrate internal teams with external health providers) and communicated these changes to facilitate embedding the FRV Health Model into BAU. A roll-out and communication plan was created and delivered by FRV’s Director Safety and Wellbeing, ACFO Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Deputy Commissioner Office of the Fire Rescue Commissioner and additional organisational representatives. FRV undertook extensive engagement activities to inform staff (including staff seconded to CFA) of changes to health, safety and wellbeing services and service provision delivery (such as dedicated Commander and ACFO training in February 2023). FRV met with senior UFU stakeholders fortnightly to support health model implementation, noting that FRV took a staged approach to service transition to ensure coordinated uptake across the organisation.

1. Medical and psychological services

The FRV Health Model transitioned medical and psychological services contracts from those rolled over from the MFB to new service providers better suited to the needs of the new FRV service delivery model. The new FRV medical and psychological services provide FRV staff with access to services when required (24 hours per day) and within one hour of each FRV District across Victoria. A telehealth function is available for staff that may work outside of FRV Districts, such as staff seconded to CFA.

FRV reported that it transitioned to a new medical services contractor on 8 March 2023 and a new psychological services contractor on 23 April 2023. Both services are now in operation across all FRV Districts.

2. Health, Safety and Wellbeing transition

As at June 2023, FRV has implemented its Health, Safety and Wellbeing transition plan. This transition plan includes benchmarking FRV health, safety and wellbeing initiatives against programs at other emergency service organisations. The transition plan includes procurement, recruitment, policy and process development, stakeholder communication, and continuous improvement approaches to guide and embed health and safety initiatives in BAU. The following health, safety and wellbeing services have transitioned to BAU:

- recovery
- psychological
- health and hygiene
- physical preparation
- injury prevention and rehabilitation
- safety.

Currently, seconded staff are required to use CFA's and FRV's hazard and injury reporting systems, CFASafe and FRVSafe, concurrently when reporting hazards and injuries. FSIM observes that although this is not an efficient process, this interim workaround provides CFA with awareness of hazards and incidents observed by secondees to assist in maintaining a safe workplace. FRV also requires awareness of hazards and incidents from its staff to help it manage its duty of care to its workforce. FSIM observes that CFA and FRV are working to streamline the hazard and injury reporting process to address this issue through the Secondment Agreement supplementary instrument 'OHS reporting and WorkSafe' (see action 3.9).

At the end of the reporting period, the FRV Health Model had gone live and transitioned to BAU, with the online FRV Health Hub providing an accessible touchpoint for all staff (including seconded staff) to access services and find information relating to the FRV Health Model.

Ongoing oversight of this BAU program will be via FRV's Health, Safety and Wellbeing department, which will report to FRV ELT on the progress towards the program's outcomes.

Findings

FSIM finds action 2.3 is progressing.

Action 2.4: Finalise relevant enterprise bargaining agreements, including the FRV Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement; FRV Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement; FRV Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement; and FRV Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement.

Action objective: Agreements are managed through appropriate channels, involving all key stakeholders, ensuring that staff are valued and supported.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2024	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires FRV to negotiate and implement three EAs:

1. *Fire Rescue Victoria Corporate and Technical Employees Agreement* (the FRV Corporate EA).
2. *Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020* (the FRV Operational EA).
3. *Fire Rescue Victoria Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement 2020*.

Progress summary

In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved FRV's change request to extend the due date for this action to June 2024, as bargaining for the three remaining agreements would not be completed by the original due date.

The FRV People and Culture Team is responsible for this program of work and reports to the FRV ELT. FRV, in accordance with the Wages Policy, meets regularly with DJCS, Department of Treasury and Finance and Industrial Relations Victoria to ensure appropriate oversight of the bargaining process.¹⁶

1. *Fire Rescue Victoria Corporate and Technical Employees Agreement*

The FRV Corporate EA replaced the *Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Corporate and Technical Employees Agreement 2017* and the *CFA Professional, Technical and Administrative Agreement 2016*. The FRV Corporate EA also combines the *FRV Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement* and the *FRV Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement*.

FRV obtained approval from government to commence bargaining in November 2021 and subsequently notified employees. As at 30 June 2023, negotiations were continuing, including the resolution of bargaining disputes which arose.¹⁷

FSIM observes that FRV is behind the formal bargaining agreements schedule.

2. *Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020*


The structure of the FRV Operational EA is intended to provide the foundations for ongoing harmonisation of the agreement in future negotiations and will comprise three sections:

1. Common / harmonised clauses relating to Division A (former MFB) and Division B (former CFA).
2. Specific clauses relating to Division A staff (former MFB) and new FRV staff only.
3. Specific clauses relating to Division B staff only.

FRV obtained approval from the government to commence bargaining in December 2021 and subsequently notified employees that bargaining would commence. Parties held their first bargaining meeting on 26 April 2022. As at 30 June 2023, negotiations were continuing, including the resolution of bargaining disputes which arose.

¹⁶ Premier and Cabinet, 2023, *Wages policy and the enterprise bargaining framework: For Victorian Government departments and agencies*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, viewed 11 October 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/wages-policy-and-enterprise-bargaining-framework>>

¹⁷ Information regarding the disputes can be found at the Fair Work Commission website <https://www.fwc.gov.au/>



FSIM observes that FRV are behind the planned schedule regarding continued formal bargaining meetings.

FRV's longer-term intention is to continue to harmonise Division A and Division B entitlements over time. FRV defines 'harmonisation' as harmonising similar key clauses in sections 2 and 3 of the FRV Operational EA. FRV advised FSIM that once the FRV Operational EA is agreed, it will develop a project plan to implement the harmonisation changes, including implementing a single payroll system for Division A and Division B staff.

3. Fire Rescue Victoria Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement 2020

The FWC approved the *Fire Rescue Victoria Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement 2020* in February 2021.

Findings

FSIM finds action 2.4 is progressing with minor delays.

6.3 Priority three actions

Context

Priority Three of the Year Two to Five Plan contains 12 actions with the shared outcome of “Plan and build for the future”. The following section provides a progress summary for each Priority Three action.

Progress of actions

Action 3.1: Develop and implement FRV Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, ICT Roadmap and Target Future Operating Model.

Action objective: FRV ICT services are aligned to business priorities and outcomes which directly support community and firefighter safety.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires FRV to develop and implement an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, ICT Roadmap, and ICT Target Future Operating Model. The ICT Strategy intends to align FRV ICT infrastructure systems across the organisation, supported by an ICT Roadmap to guide FRV ICT Strategy implementation. The ICT Target Future State Operating Model intends to establish business processes and governance arrangements to support the ICT Strategy transition to BAU.

Progress summary

The ICT Strategy is a critical enabler to support FRV in its broader strategic aspirations to modernise how it works and leverage interconnected knowledge and communication opportunities as it sets the direction for ICT maturity and guides the evolution of ICT systems for FRV.


To initiate the strategy as at 30 June 2023, FRV had commissioned a review of FRV’s ICT systems at their current state. The review identified capability gaps, inefficiencies, and risks to FRV’s ICT systems, which included:

- legacy applications based on old technology such as Firecom 1, led to challenges in accessing ICT support expertise and software upgrades
- non-aligned data management reduces efficiency and data-sharing capabilities
- cyber-security applications and operations were immature and posing a business risk
- FRV’s ICT systems and operating model were siloed, and ICT solutions evolved organically within business units, leading to systems duplication across the organisation and reduced clarity of ICT responsibilities and accountabilities.

To address these challenges, FRV developed a high-level ICT Strategy, an ICT Roadmap and a ICT Target Future State Operating Model, endorsed by FRV ELT in September 2021.

As at 30 June 2023, FRV made progress on foundational elements of the ICT Strategy, such as the commencement of a new Human Resources Information System platform, which will underpin aspects of the ICT Strategy. Activities to procure a Cloud Based Integration Platform were significantly impacted by the December 2022 cyber-attack.

FSIM observed that the FRV Information and Communication Services Team (ICS) has established an ICT Program Delivery Office to provide governance oversight of FRV’s ICT delivery. Initially, this office was mobilised to support the delivery of FRV’s recovery efforts from the December 2022 cyber-attack. Governance, methods, tools and capabilities developed for the cyber-security attack recovery program will continue to support the delivery of the overall ICT Strategy.



The ICT Strategy, ICT Roadmap and the ICT Target Future Operating Model are aligned to the FRV Strategy (action 5.3). At the end of the reporting period, FSIM understands that work is ongoing to mitigate any further risks to FRV's ICT systems.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.1 is progressing.

Action 3.2: Complete delivery of the \$48.2 million fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.

Action objective: Priority stations and appliances are replaced to ensure they are fit for purpose and enhance operational response.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – significant delays

Context

This action requires CFA to complete delivery of the \$48.2 million Station Fleet Replacement Program which comprises the following projects:

- 15 Stations Replacement Program for volunteer brigades
- Clyde Volunteer Station (a new station at a new location)
- Tanker Replacement (50 Firefighting Appliances) to replace 50 aged rural wildfire response tankers with 48 Heavy Tankers and two Crew Cab Light Tankers.

The Station Fleet Replacement Program funded through the \$126 million Capability Funding allocated as part of Fire Services Reform implementation to enhance CFA's critical training, equipment, infrastructure, and volunteer support delivery. This program will contribute to improved service delivery of fire and emergency services by brigades in the CAoV.

Progress summary

As of 30 June 2023, five CFA-led fire station replacements were completed. Eight of the 15 stations in the Station Replacement Program and the Clyde Volunteer Station have been transitioned to CSBA.

Table 9 outlines the status of the respective stations and fleet replacement projects delivery as at 30 June 2023.

Table 9: Station Fleet Replacement Program status

Station Fleet Replacement	Status	Progress as at 30 June 2023
15 Stations Replacement Program (Details refer to Table 10)	In progress – significant delays	Five station replacements completed by CFA. Eight station replacement projects have successfully transitioned from CFA to CSBA and are currently at various development stages.
Clyde Volunteer Station	In progress – significant delays	Land search and acquisition and project delivery has successfully transitioned from CFA to CSBA.
Tanker Replacement (50 Firefighting Appliances)	In progress – on track	16 tankers delivered. 2 Crew Cab Light Tankers delivered.

1. 15 Stations Replacement Program and Clyde Volunteer Station

CFA established a project plan and schedule to deliver the 15 Stations Replacement Program for volunteer brigades. The plan notes that many of the 15 stations to be replaced are over 40 years old and require upgrading to meet the demands of growing townships and emerging weather threats.

Table 10 outlines the status of 15 Station Replacement Program as at 30 June 2023.

Table 10: 15 Stations Replacement Program

Stations	Delivery Agency	Status	Progress as at 30 June 2023
1. Coldstream	CFA	Complete	New station complete and open on 2 June 2023.
2. Modewarre	CFA	Complete	New station complete and open on 24 May 2023.
3. Dimboola	CFA	Complete	New station complete and operational since February 2023.
4. Warracknabeal	CFA	Complete	New station complete and handover to brigade in May 2023.
5. Molka	CFA	Complete	New station complete and open on 15 June 2023.
6. Natte Yallock	CFA	In progress – on track	Station refurbishment commenced at the end of May 2023.
7. Morrisons	CFA	On hold	The project's transition to CSBA is pending on the confirmation of the brigade's decision to retain and refurbish existing station.
8. The Basin	CSBA	In progress –Delays	The cultural heritage process, s52.30 consultation, station design and planning permission application are in progress.
9. Golden Square	CSBA	In progress –Delays	Construction commenced June 2023 with an April 2024 completion date.
10. Pyalong	CSBA	In progress –Delays	Planning permit issued May 2023. CSBA is preparing tender documentation.
11. Dartmoor	CSBA	In progress – Delays	Issues identified with the site due to Crown land. Alternative land options being investigated.
12. Winnindoo	CSBA	In progress – Delays	Station design and planning permission application are in progress.
13. Hoddles Creek	CSBA	In progress – Delays	Station design and planning permission application are in progress.
14. Leitchville	CSBA	In progress – Delays	Station design and planning permission application are in progress.
15. St Leonards	CSBA	In progress –Delays	Construction completed by 3 August 2023.


2. Integrated Fire Services Infrastructure Delivery Arrangements

As part of the newly implemented integrated fire services infrastructure delivery arrangements by the Victorian Government, the Minister requested CFA to transition the delivery responsibility for 20 identified major capital projects to the CSBA in August 2022. As at 30 June 2023, 19 of the 20 identified infrastructure projects have been fully transitioned to CSBA. Nine of these 19 projects (eight of the 15 station replacements (Table 10), and the Clyde Volunteer Station construction) are included in action 3.2. CFA is responsible for delivering the remaining seven station replacements under the 15 Station Replacement Program.

CFA and CSBA signed an MOU to transition the delivery of the required capital projects from CFA to CSBA in October 2022. Based on the evidence reviewed, under the integrated delivery arrangements, CFA and FRV will maintain appropriate oversight of projects transitioned, including retaining accountability to approve design decisions, key project document management, consultation with key stakeholders and construction interfaces to ensure the projects meet their respective operational requirements.

As part of consolidating the delivery of fire services infrastructure under CSBA, DJCS and CSBA wrote to VFBV in February 2023, advising of the government's decision to transition CFA capital delivery programs to CSBA.

Before the transition, CSBA undertook a due diligence review, with assistance from CFA, which has provided the government with a robust understanding of the current status and the challenges impacting the delivery of these infrastructure projects, including land acquisition, planning, construction and supply chain issues.



CSBA's role in delivering these projects is consistent with the Fire Services Statement's intent to bring together project management and procurement expertise to better support the connectedness of fire services agencies and other emergency services. The new integrated delivery model aims to:

- streamline construction delivery and project management for the construction of critical fire service facilities
- enable a consistent approach to cost planning and allow for more efficient procurement and cost-effective sourcing of materials and labour
- allow CFA and FRV to focus on their core functions to ensure public safety and deliver essential fire services such as emergency response, training, and community engagement
- enhance the government oversight of the existing and future critical fire services infrastructure investment.

3. Tanker Replacement (50 Firefighting appliances)

The Tanker Replacement project aims to address issues around the age of CFA's tanker fleet and replace them with vehicles (heavy tankers) designed for improved firefighter safety and useability.

CFA reported that tankers had undergone a rigorous specification development and design process before manufacture and defects inspection process to ensure they are consistent with the agreed specifications. 48 Heavy Tankers commenced manufacture by a local manufacturer in September 2021.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.2 is progressing, noting CSBA has identified challenges across the station replacement projects, such as land acquisition, planning, construction and supply chain issues, which have delayed the completion of these critical fire services facilities.

Action 3.3: Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV.

Action objective: The successful transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	Dec 2024	In progress – minor delays

Context

The action requires CFA, working with DJCS and FRV, to execute the Fire Services Reform Transfer Strategy (the Transfer Strategy) to transfer certain property, rights, liabilities, and obligations from CFA to FRV.

The Transfer Strategy, endorsed by the Fire Services Reform Corporate Sub-Committee in November 2020, was separated into five tranches and implemented through allocation statements, transfer statements, and agreements.

Progress summary

In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved CFA's change request to extend the due date for this action to December 2024, recognising the ongoing activity to complete the transfer process.

CFA, DJCS and FRV collaborated to complete transfers associated with Tranches One, Two and Three of the Transfer Strategy in FY 2020-21. In consultation with DJCS and FRV, CFA continued to progress work to finalise the remaining allocation statement.

In addition, and while not a component of the Transfer Strategy, CFA, DJCS and FRV continued to consider appropriate pathways to ensure the contingent liabilities or obligations of CFA relating to employees transferred to FRV under s103 of the FRV Act to be allocated from CFA to FRV (related to Tranche Five).

1. Tranche One

Tranche One transferred 37 co-located stations, associated appliances, and the financial arrangements for the transferred assets from CFA to FRV. Tranche One was completed in June 2021.

2. Tranche Two

Tranche Two completed the transfer of all employee liabilities (annual leave, long service leave and Operational Performance Improvement Initiatives claims) related to CFA employees transferred to FRV. This Tranche Two also transferred cash associated with employee liabilities and the 350 Firefighter Program (P350) from CFA to FRV. Tranche Two was completed in June 2021.

3. Tranche Three

Tranche Three completed the transfer of P350 in-flight capital projects from CFA to FRV, including a replacement station at Bendigo, a co-located station at Craigieburn and three Breathing Apparatus (BA) Vans from Frankston, Corio, and Ballarat stations. Tranche Three was completed in June 2021.

4. Tranche Four

Tranche Four is focused on transferring of equipment at the 37 stations (33 are co-located stations and four are career-only stations) and the Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre at Craigieburn from CFA to FRV.

To progress work on Tranche Four, CFA, FRV and DJCS agreed in May 2022 to split the tranche into two parts:

4.1 [Personal protective equipment](#)

This component prioritised transferring the following personal protective clothing and equipment assets from CFA to FRV:

- 127 Draeger BA exchange cylinders, kept in the Protective Equipment Rooms at specific fire stations
- Specific critical support equipment for BA, located at the Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing Management Centre, Corio.

This component of Tranche Four was completed in September 2022.

4.2 Transfer of remaining equipment and assets

This component focused on transferring personal protective equipment (including lockers, cages and containers); office equipment and furnishings; plant and equipment (including tools); training equipment; and furniture, fixtures and equipment, loose furniture, small appliances and white goods.

The progress of this transfer was delayed due to refurbishment works at four co-located stations where Tenancy Agreement schedules are yet to be finalised (Dandenong, Melton, South Warrandyte and Geelong City fire stations).

As of 30 June 2023, CFA was working with DJCS and FRV to progress the transfer of remaining equipment and assets under Tranche Four.

4.3 Tenancy Agreement

As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2020/21, whilst the Tenancy Agreement is not a deliverable of Tranche Four, finalising all co-located station schedules under the Tenancy Agreement signed and executed in May 2022 will simplify the transfer of remaining assets under Tranche Four.¹⁸

In March 2022, CFA and FRV agreed in principle to the terms and conditions of the overarching Tenancy Agreement and 29 co-located station schedules.¹⁹ As of 30 June 2023, three tenancy schedules remained outstanding for co-located stations at Dandenong, Melton, and South Warrandyte fire stations. FSIM noted that the tenancy schedule for Geelong City had been agreed upon in principle at the end of the reporting period.

FSIM has noted ongoing discussion at weekly HoA meetings about finalising the three outstanding schedules for Dandenong, Melton and South Warrandyte fire stations.

5. Tranche Five

Tranche Five involves the transfer of contingent liabilities or obligations of CFA related to employees transferred to FRV under s102 of the FRV Act.

FSIM received evidence demonstrating that the transfer of, rights, obligations and liabilities, including contingent liabilities associated with s102 of the FRV Act, was completed in March 2022.

In completing Tranche Five, CFA, DJCS and FRV identified no provisions within the FRV Act to transfer the rights, obligations and liabilities, including contingent liabilities associated with s103 employees transferred from CFA to FRV. DJCS was leading work to identify an alternative pathway to resolve this matter including the preparation of a formal agreement and an amendment to the FRV Act.

At the end of the reporting period, DJCS was considering the most appropriate way forward to enable the transfer of contingent liabilities and obligations relating to s103 transferred employees to be allocated.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.3 is progressing.

¹⁸ Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2021, *Annual Report 2020/21 Year One: Setting the foundations*, Victorian Government, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2020-21>>

¹⁹ Each of the 33 co-located stations has its own schedule which forms part of the overarching Tenancy Agreement. These schedules and the overarching agreement determine how volunteers use and access facilities at co-located stations.

Action 3.4: FRV, in consultation with CFA, deliver agreed capital works to enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades.

Action objective: Capital works enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades ensuring access and availability to station facilities and amenities is maintained.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires FRV, in consultation with CFA, to deliver agreed capital works to enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades.

As part of Fire Services Reform, CFA transitioned the delivery of in-flight projects and responsibility for the 350 Firefighter Program – Capital Sub-Program (P350 Sub-Program)²⁰ to FRV, transferring nine co-located station build and modification projects to FRV as part of this action. In addition, CFA led the construction of three new stations and a tanker replacement program, which following completion, were transferred to FRV as at 30 June 2023. Details outlining this additional program of work are in action 3.5.

Progress summary

FRV established a project plan following the transition of the P350 Sub-Program from CFA in 2021 and undertook an internal review of projects transferred. The project plan outlines the proposed scope based on FRV specifications and forecast completion for the nine-station projects transferred to FRV.

As at 30 June 2023, FSIM understands that DJCS was working in consultation with CFA and FRV to prepare options to progress station builds/modifications in this action that are currently on hold.

Table 11 outlines the status of nine co-located station builds as per the FRV P350 Project Status Report as at 30 June 2023.

Table 11: FRV co-located station builds, modifications and progress²¹

Co-located fire station	Status	Progress as at 30 June 2023
1. Frankston (FS91)	In progress – minor delays	FRV ELT supported redevelopment at the current site. Work underway on station concept design with application for planning permit to follow.
2. Bendigo Permanent (FS73)	On hold	Project on hold as FRV works through the consultation process.
3. Latrobe/Moe (FS74)	In progress – minor delays	Application for subdivision submitted.
4. Corio (FS62)	In progress – on track	FRV were considering whether a relocation and rebuild for Corio was required, given the location of a new station at Lara.
5. Lara (FS61)	In progress – on track	Commenced architect drawings.
6. Mornington (FS94)	In progress – minor delays	Completed environmental land classification and Division 6 HAZMAT identification process. Commencing Stage 2 works – extension to Turnout room and shower construction.

²⁰ The 350 firefighter Program – Capital Sub-Program (P350 Sub-program) is the Victorian Government commitment in 2015 to deliver 450 new career firefighters for Victoria, 350 of them with CFA.

²¹ As noted, these co-located station builds remain with FRV for delivery until such time as the integrated fire service infrastructure delivery arrangements are agreed

Co-located fire station	Status	Progress as at 30 June 2023
7. Boronia (FS85)	In progress – on track	Commenced Stage 1 works including new portal, dormitory and storeroom extension. Commencing Stage 2 works including upgrades to the Turnout room, lounge, mess, administration and gym areas.
8. Ballarat City (FS67)	On hold	The original scope was for a refurbishment of the station. Further planning is being undertaken to consider alternative sites. Configuration scope of works are on hold.
9. Springvale (FS89)	In progress – on track	Site secured; land parcel is under lease. Consultation and planning will commence to coincide with end of lease.

1. Integrated Fire Services Infrastructure Delivery Arrangements

As FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 outlined, the Victorian Government implemented new integrated fire services infrastructure delivery arrangements (action 3.2).²²

Under the new integrated fire services infrastructure delivery arrangements, the Minister requested that FRV transition 17 station build and modification projects to CSBA in August 2022. Of these 17 projects, nine station build and modification projects are in action 3.4.

At the end of the reporting period, an MOU confirming arrangements had not yet been signed, and project delivery responsibilities remained with FRV.

Under this arrangement, FSIM understands that CSBA is responsible for the delivery of approved infrastructure projects on behalf of FRV. FRV will remain responsible for identifying suitable locations for future infrastructure needs (including fire stations) and confirming its operational and design requirements per the Infrastructure Agreement obligations under the FRV Operational EA. Post-transition, CSBA will assist FRV to identify and secure suitable land parcels that meet FRV's specified requirements and will engage consultants and contractors to deliver the facilities in accordance with FRV's requirements.

CSBA established an Infrastructure Delivery Framework that details the standard approach to infrastructure delivery used by CSBA to manage major capital works projects on behalf of DJCS Groups and portfolio agencies, including CFA and FRV. In March 2022, CSBA undertook a due diligence review, with assistance from FRV, which has provided the government with a robust understanding of the challenges impacting the delivery of FRV infrastructure projects.

2. Engagement activities

Given that the nine station builds and modifications included in action 3.4 are co-located stations, FRV needed to consult on the stations' concept, design and location with CFA, UFU and VFBV.

2.1. Engagement with UFU


At the end of the reporting period, FRV was consulting with the UFU on the integrated delivery model, and an MOU confirming arrangements had not yet been signed.

2.2. Engagement with CFA and volunteers

Based on the evidence provided by FRV, monthly infrastructure meetings have occurred since September 2022. These meetings ensure regular communication between FRV and CFA and include the progress of FRV co-located station builds. However, CFA reported that, since the transfer of the P350 Sub-Program, FRV had undertaken limited and high-level consultation with CFA, resulting in CFA's uncertainty as to the status of the projects at Craigieburn, Ballarat City, Bendigo, Corio, Frankston, and Springvale.

FSIM considers it imperative that agencies undertake effective consultation where they are leading projects either on behalf of, or directly impacting another agency. Specifically, regarding the overarching objective of this action, it is crucial that co-located stations meet CFA and FRV requirements for

²²Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 87.



enhanced service delivery and ensure career firefighters and volunteers have access to the right resources to do their jobs and keep them safe.

3. Forecast costs pressures of projects transitioned to FRV from CFA

Following the transition of co-located station build projects from CFA to FRV, FRV undertook an internal review to reconfirm the scope and requirements of nine co-located station build projects to ensure alignment with FRV specifications and responsibilities. The review highlighted that the nine projects would not be completed until June 2026 due to significant delivery challenges, including land acquisition and ensuring that planning and design requirements meet FRV standard station design, FRV and CFA service delivery needs, and volunteer requirements.

Furthermore, FRV identified cost pressures and options to deliver the scope of works and to mitigate project delivery challenges for the nine co-located station projects included in action 3.4. Challenges include changes in scope for co-located station projects transferred to meet FRV's standard station design, operationalisation requirements, and escalating construction costs and land prices.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.4 is progressing, noting there is a requirement for CFA and FRV to establish acceptance criteria or measures that will allow agencies to demonstrate that they have met the objective of the action, which is to “enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades ensuring access and availability to sustain facilities and amenities is maintained”.

FSIM observes significant delivery challenges across the co-located station build projects, delaying the completion of critical fire services facilities. These challenges include land acquisition, construction and supply chain issues, planning, and transition of project management responsibility to the integrated fire services infrastructure delivery model.

Action 3.5: CFA to complete delivery of agreed capital works projects on behalf of FRV.

Action objective: Delivery of capital works projects on behalf of FRV by CFA are complete, ensuring FRV has access to resources needed to provide effective service delivery.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to complete capital works for three co-located fire stations and fleet replacement projects for 14 Heavy Pumpers and one Combined Aerial Rescue Pumper (CARP) on behalf of FRV.

As part of Fire Services Reform, CFA transitioned the delivery of in-flight projects and responsibility for the 350 Firefighter Program – Capital Sub-Program (the P350 Sub-program) to FRV. This transition includes transferring nine co-located station build and modification projects to FRV as part of action 3.4. In addition, CFA led the construction of three new co-located stations and a tanker replacement program included in this action 3.5, which, following completion, were transferred to FRV as at 30 June 2023.

Progress summary

CFA reported this action as completed and acquitted the action in January 2023.

Table 12 outlines the status of the respective station and fleet replacement projects that CFA delivered on behalf of FRV.

Table 12: Station and fleet replacement status

Stations Replacement and Fleet Projects	Status 30 June 2023	Project Completion
Stations Replacement Projects		
Melton Fire Station modifications	Completed	November 2021
Morwell Fire Station project	Completed	November 2022
Bendigo Temporary Fire Station	Completed	March 2022
Fleet Projects		
14 Heavy Pumpers	Completed	December 2021
One combined aerial rescue pumper (CARP)	Completed	December 2021


1. Station Replacement Projects

CFA reported capital works for three co-located stations as complete as at January 2023.

As at 30 June 2023, FRV had accepted Melton, Morwell and Bendigo Temporary Fire Stations as completed. These stations met FRV standard design requirements and were determined by FRV to be fit for purpose.

While these stations met FRV standard design requirements, based on the information provided, FSIM observed a lack of agreed and formalised acceptance criteria to assess the completion of station replacements and upgrades where one agency is undertaking work on behalf of the other. Without agreed acceptance criteria, there may be ambiguity regarding when a station replacement or upgrade is reported as “complete.” For example, FSIM discussions with both agencies regarding Morwell, Melton and Bendigo Temporary fire stations found no formal acceptance criteria had been established. Agencies were using a “practical completion” baseline to assess completion rather than a formalised agreement based on the action objective (e.g., confirming via agreed measures/evidence that the capital works projects provide access to resources for FRV to provide effective service delivery”).

In June 2023, CFA advised that a review of the current handover process between CFA and FRV has highlighted an opportunity for improvement by defining acceptance criteria to assess the completion of future co-location station replacement and upgrade projects, including projects transitioned to CSBA for



delivery. FSIM notes that this issue has been raised at HoA for consideration and to determine how assessment criteria could be incorporated into future acceptance processes.

CFA will continue to retain responsibility for any defects for stations completed and handed over to FRV as per the nominated and agreed 12-month construction defects liability period, in line with the Ministerial Direction on Public Construction. As at 30 June 2023, CFA continues to retain responsibility for construction defects for the Morwell Fire Station.

2. Fleet Projects

At the end of the reporting period, FRV accepted the handover of 14 Heavy Pumpers and one CARP from CFA and all vehicles were registered to FRV.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.5 partially implemented. FSIM notes the risk identified results from a lack of agreed and formalised acceptance criteria to assess the completion of co-located station replacements and upgrades where one agency is undertaking work on behalf of the other. FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Action 3.6: Rollout of the FRV Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) ensembles as part of the PPC project.

Action objective: New structural ensemble delivered in accordance with FRV specifications and delivery timelines. All FRV firefighters are to be supplied with the new generation PPC structural ensemble.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires FRV to roll-out 12,000 next-generation Structural Personal Protective Clothing sets (Structural PPC) and 8,000 Wildfire Personal Protective Clothing sets (Wildfire PPC) that meet FRV specifications by June 2023. Introducing these next-generation PPCs will ensure that all FRV firefighters possess the right resources to effectively perform their duties and safeguard their safety.²³

FRV advises that 'roll-out' encompasses procurement, testing, distribution, and training associated with the new equipment.

Progress summary

FRV entered a contract to procure 12,000 sets of Structural PPC and 8,000 sets of Wildfire PPC, including helmets, jackets, trousers, gloves, boots, and respiratory protection equipment in January 2021. As of 30 June 2023, FRV had distributed 8,400 Structural PPC sets (70 per cent) and 4,300 Wildfire PPC sets (54 per cent) to FRV firefighters. With this rollout, 3,070 FRV firefighters and 204 FRV firefighters seconded to CFA had received next-generation PPC.

The FRV Uniform Sub-Committee has governance oversight for this project and the Project Team reports to this committee monthly on progress and challenges in rolling out PPC.

FSIM received evidence that FRV worked collaboratively with the UFU and the selected supplier to develop the specifications and design of the next-generation PPC throughout FY 2020-21.²⁴ FRV reported that the Structural PPC procurement process involved extensive research, rigorous performance testing to confirm compliance with the joint *Australian/New Zealand Standards 4967 Protective Clothing for Firefighters (2009) (AS/NZS4967)*²⁵ and wearer trials to ensure the safety and welfare of FRV firefighters. Additionally, FRV provided evidence to FSIM that demonstrated consultation with CFA on its requirements for the new Structural and Wildfire PPC for staff seconded from FRV.

FRV advised that the December 2022 cyber-attack severely impacted its information and computer technology systems and impacted FRV's ability to access information. As a result, at the time of reporting, FSIM had not sighted evidence on the research and performance testing FRV conducted to confirm the next generation Structural PPC meets the AS/NZ4967 requirements or the full FRV wearer trials. FSIM notes that FRV has advised that both are completed.


FRV actively sought feedback from firefighters during the rollout process to address concerns and issues. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with staff noting that the next generation Structural PPC and Wildfire PPC provided enhanced comfort, mobility, and protection.

FRV notes that the next-generation Structural PPC provides clear visual differentiation compared to the current FRV PPC. The next-generation PPC offer better burn prevention, better ergonomics to enable more freedom of movement, and reflective tapes provide glow in-the-dark visibility. FRV further notes that the next generation Structural PPC are offered in styles to fit both men and women, an example of

²³FRV defined "all firefighters" as all "operational firefighters" including those seconded to CFA and non-operational firefighters, such as PADs.

²⁴Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2021, *Annual Report 2020/21 Year One: Setting the foundations*, Victorian Government, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2020-21>>, p 71.

²⁵AS/NZS 4967-2009, *Protective clothing for firefighters – Requirements and test methods for protective clothing used for structural firefighting*



FRV working towards their Strategic Plan outcome to prioritise all staff safety and wellbeing, regardless of gender.

After rolling out the next generation Structural PPC and Wildfire PPC, FRV informed FSIM that it intended to repurpose the existing PPC (former MFB and CFA) as pool garments for FRV firefighters and are also consulting with CFA about the possibility of returning some former CFA PPC to CFA to be used by volunteer firefighters.

FRV is preparing an exit strategy to transition the next-generation PPC project into regular operations to equip all FRV firefighters with the new Structural and Wildfire PPC ensemble. FRV plans to transition PPC delivery to BAU once the 80 per cent delivery threshold is reached.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.4 is progressing. FSIM notes that all core FRV PPC roll out activities are completed, and procurement arrangements are in place to support the remaining rollout in Q1 and Q2 FY 2023-24.

Action 3.7: Agencies mature existing joint governance arrangements that support the implementation of the program and ongoing development of interoperability procedures and arrangements.

Action objective: Ensure accountability for harmonisation of procedures as reform progresses, and continuous improvements are embedded. Should interoperability-related issues arise, these will be resolved through the Fire Services Operational Committee.

Lead agency: CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA and FRV to mature joint governance arrangements and develop interoperability procedures (IPs) and arrangements.

CFA and FRV have different deliverables defined in their quarterly reporting to the Minister for this action.

CFA's deliverables under this action relate to joint corporate governance, including establishing HoA, FSOC and FSOC sub-committees.

FRV's deliverables under this action include:

- develop a plan of agreed IPs governance framework
- develop agreed IPs with progressive updates
- implement a governance framework.

There is a significant focus on governance in this action, and both agencies have reported a "completed" status against their action deliverables. FRV has a deliverable under this action to "develop agreed IPs with progressive updates"; however, CFA and FRV agree that work to update and develop IPs sits under action 3.9. Given the agency agreement, FSIM has reported the progress of specific IPs under action 3.9, as it has a clear action deliverable to review and update IPs. A summary of IP status is outlined at Table 15 in action 3.9.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA and FRV reported this action as completed. FRV acquitted this action in June 2023, and CFA had not yet submitted the acquittal form during the reporting period. This action has interdependencies with actions 3.9 (Harmonisation), 3.10 (Delegations), and 3.11 (SLDA processes). More broadly, this action impacts all Year Two to Five Plan actions given that HoA serves as the executive forum for CFA and FRV to progress reform-related matters, and FSOC has accountability for interoperability-focused activities and opportunities.

CFA and FRV established HoA in October 2021 as a senior decision-making body for reform-related matters. The HoA Committee Charter outlines the terms of reference detailing how HoA will operate. Processes relating to issues escalation and resolution, annual self-evaluation and meeting frequency and requirements were updated in FY 2021-22.

CFA and FRV established FSOC in 2021. FSOC reports and provides quarterly updates directly to HoA. FSOC aims to identify and promote collaboration and joint interoperability opportunities to provide a complementary fire service delivery to the community and continued strength in working relations between CFA and FRV. In FY 2022-23, CFA and FRV updated the FSOC Terms of Reference (ToR) to outline the expected behaviours of members and provide details on sub-committee reporting and work plan development. FSOC prepared an annual work program in FY 2021-22 which it continued to report against in FY 2022-23, and the Committee meets monthly to discuss interoperability matters.

CFA and FRV established six FSOC sub-committees between FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. The sub-committees are co-chaired by CFA and FRV, meet either on a bi-monthly or monthly basis, and report directly to FSOC. These sub-committees are focused on technical details and are establishing

respective work plans to guide programs of work. Four sub-committees – Operational Communications, Training, Community Safety and Protective Equipment – were operationalised in FY 2021-22. CFA and FRV finalised the ToR for the remaining two sub-committees – Doctrine and Specialist Response – in FY 2022-23.

In December 2022, CFA and FRV issued a joint directive to FSOC, acknowledging the challenges for FSOC and their related workload. This joint directive set expectations for FSOC regarding:

- work planning, establishing ToR for sub-committees, and implementing appropriate records management and access protocols.
- completion of a joint exercise program for co-located stations.

In addition to establishing ToR and workplans, FSIM notes evidence that a SharePoint repository had been established with access available to relevant CFA and FRV FSOC representatives, enabling efficient and transparent sharing of information.

The FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 highlighted concerns regarding the cessation of joint exercising and FSIM acknowledges agencies' efforts to address this matter.²⁶ FSIM observes that, as at the end of the reporting period, FSOC had not yet addressed the joint direction to establish a formal joint exercising program for co-located stations; however, FSIM did see evidence of ad hoc joint training taking place at some co-located stations, driven by the initiative of station staff and volunteers.

FRV is preparing a presentation on the process to establish joint exercises for an FSOC meeting in FY 2023-24. CFA and FRV intend that the governance arrangements established under this action will operate as BAU, noting that sub-committees may be established or disbanded depending on future joint organisational needs and in line with the overarching FSOC ToR.

Agencies have taken clear actions to progress and embed operational governance structures to ensure accountability for harmonising procedures as the reform progresses. However, HoA and FSOC have acknowledged the challenges FSOC faced in delivering its work plan and providing an effective forum to support interoperability between CFA and FRV. Specifically, FSOC highlighted the availability and consistency of key personnel, external stakeholder engagement requirements, and the development of work plans to ensure clear objectives and activities as key issues impacting its effectiveness. In addressing these matters, FSOC sought to mitigate the workload imposition on FSOC members by establishing the sub-committees and requiring sub-committees to develop their respective workplans.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.7 is partially implemented. There are aspects of action delivery that remain outstanding, with challenges faced by FSOC in delivering its workplan.

FSIM observes that maintaining FSOC's accountability for delivery via HoA will be an important factor in agencies achieving this action's objective.

At the end of the reporting period, FRV's action deliverables for 3.7 retained a requirement to "develop agreed IPs with progressive updates". FRV notes in FRV's quarterly report to the Minister that the development and review of IPs had transitioned to BAU via FSOC, therefore action 3.7 should be considered completed. FSIM notes that several IPs remain outstanding as at 30 June 2023 – the details of which FSIM has included in action 3.9, noting that FRV's 3.7 action deliverable is not formally transitioned to 3.9.

Given the challenges in FSOC acquitting its workplan and the recent reported completion of this action by agencies, FSIM has not yet undertaken an assessment of effectiveness.

²⁶Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 80.

Action 3.8: CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA’s Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements.

Action objective: CFA’s RTO obligations and requirements are satisfied by FRV training staff secondment protocols.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	August 2023	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA and FRV to develop protocols to ensure FRV seconded training staff meet CFA’s Registered Training Organisation (RTO) requirements.

In 2022, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) completed a re-registration audit and granted CFA’s RTO full Vocational Education and Training re-registration, with no conditions, until 28 February 2028. The audit confirmed that FRV seconded training staff have the qualifications to deliver CFA courses and that the Secondment Agreement currently in place between CFA and FRV complies with VRQA’s requirements for third-party arrangements.

Key action deliverables include:

- FRV and CFA to establish a working group to document requirements and respective RTO obligations.
- CFA’s responsibilities for ongoing development to ensure seconded trainers continue to meet currency and proficient requirements are clearly defined.

Progress summary

FSIM received evidence that CFA is a training organisation registered by the VRQA.

In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved CFA’s change request to extend the due date for this action to August 2023 to enable CFA and FRV to discuss whether there is a need for separate protocols.

CFA and FRV collaborated through the FSOC Training Sub-Committee to develop protocols and raise matters that impact seconded staff. FRV also consulted with the Consultative Committee’s Training Sub-Committee on matters impacting FRV staff. This project reports to the CFA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the CFA-led RTO Governance Committee that oversees CFA’s quality control and ensures alignment to RTO requirements.

CFA has implemented processes to ensure FRV seconded staff satisfy CFA’s RTO obligations, including an authorisation tool to ensure trainers are appropriately authorised. It delivers a monthly training service for seconded instructors, trainers, and assessors. FSIM observed that CFA and FRV continued to work through processes to ensure compliance with CFA’s Working with Children’s Check (WWCC) requirements, outlined in actions 4.5 and 5.1 and notes that individuals who do not have a valid WWCC cannot deliver specified training on behalf of CFA.

CFA is also investigating options to implement an appropriate system to enable all trainers to access training materials and oversee relevant training records.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.8 is progressing.

Action 3.9: Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.

Action objective: Procedures, including service level procedures between CFA, FRV and any related party, are harmonised – where practical, and fit for purpose to support effective operations.

Lead agency: CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2024	In progress – significant delay

Context

CFA and FRV have different action deliverables defined in their quarterly reporting to the Minister for this action. CFA’s deliverables against this action include:

- Review and update interoperability procedures (IPs) underpinning the CFA/FRV Joint Operational Activity MoU.
- Harmonisation of operational doctrine via an established doctrine working group.
- Finalise SLDAs and schedules and execute.
- Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management, and review of the current SLDAs for operational functions.

FRV’s deliverables against this action include:

- Finalise SLDAs and schedules and execute.
- Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management, and review of the current SLDAs for operational functions.

Under action 3.7, FRV has a deliverable to “Develop agreed IPs with progressive updates”. As noted in action 3.7, CFA and FRV agree that work to update and develop IPs sits more appropriately under action 3.9. Therefore, FSIM provides commentary on progress against IPs in this action, noting that FRV’s 3.7 action deliverable is not formally transitioned.

Progress summary

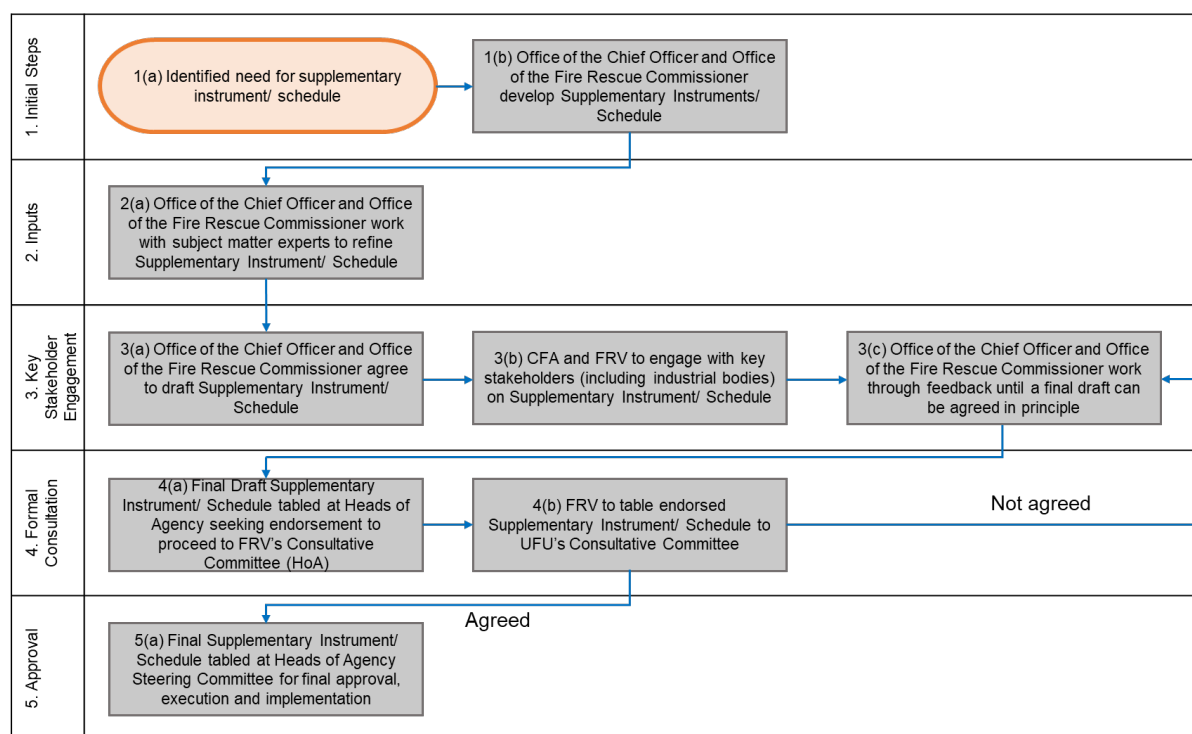
In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved CFA’s and FRV’s mutually supportive change requests to extend the due date for this action to 30 June 2024. FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22 notes that consultation processes contributed to delays in finalising agreements.²⁷ Agencies have taken action to address this issue. In Year Three, HoA, the governance body that approves SLDA schedules and Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments, established an agreed workflow to clarify roles, responsibilities, and consultation processes for engagement on SLDA schedules and supplementary instruments (Figure 3).²⁸

Under this workflow, CFA and FRV reach approval-in-principle on a joint CFA/FRV position for schedules and supplementary instruments before going to informal consultation with key stakeholders, including working groups of the Consultative Committee. Following informal consultation, the agreed schedules and supplementary instruments are then tabled at HoA for endorsement to initiate formal consultation with the Consultative Committee. Should the Consultative Committee be unable to reach an agreement on the proposed supplementary instruments or schedules, agencies would reconvene to address issues raised by the Committee. After formal consultation, the final schedules and supplementary instruments are provided to HoA for approval, execution and implementation. It is essential to note that establishing this workflow process provides clarity, transparency and accountability between the two agencies regarding their agreed position before the formal consultation phase begins.

²⁷Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 55.

²⁸ HoA consultation workflow – endorsed 24 April 2023

Figure 3: CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee-endorsed workflow for supplementary instruments/schedules



CFA and FRV also share a tracking document weekly via HoA that provides visibility on agency progress and work on SLDA schedules, Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments, delegation authorisations, and Tenancy Agreement schedules. FSIM supports this approach as it provides increased clarity and transparency for all parties in the process of approving key reform-related agreements.

This action has interdependencies with actions 3.7 (Joint governance), 3.10 (Delegations) and 3.11 (CFA policies and procedures to support the SLDA and schedules).

The status of SLDA schedules, Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments, and IPs are provided at Tables 13, 14, and 15 below.

1. Service Level Deed of Agreement schedules

As at 30 June 2023, CFA and FRV had finalised three of 12 schedules (Table 13).

The original SLDA intended that FRV would provide alarm assessment services for CFA, but this was mutually agreed to be unworkable. CFA and FRV agreed to manage alarm assessments within their respective areas. CFA and FRV finalised service provision arrangements for alarm assessment in January 2023.

CFA and FRV executed two schedules relating to structural fire investigation and bushfire investigation in FY 2022-23 and issued joint communications recognising a complementary approach to fire investigation that utilises volunteer capabilities supported by career counterparts.

FSIM summarises the progress for key SLDA schedules below and provides data, where available, to demonstrate average compliance rates and time for referral completion since the reform's inception.

Specific data relating to service delivery timeframes and compliance in the following examples were drawn from CFA's Quarter Four 2022-2023 Community Infrastructure Report.

1.1. Service delivery – Fire Investigation

Fire investigators employed by FRV have the appropriate delegations to perform structural fire investigations in CAoV. CFA and FRV prepared an IP outlining the activation process of FRV Fire

Investigators within the CFA District.²⁹ The IP requires FRV to provide a fire investigation report to CFA outlining the findings within 28 days of conducting an investigation.

FRV advised FSIM that timeframe compliance is monitored manually, and FRV could not provide evidence regarding compliance to this 28-day timeframe. FRV also advised that they are moving to an online Fire Investigation Management System that links to CFA via a shared platform. FRV consider that this will facilitate data collection and monitoring of compliance rates. FSIM will continue to seek evidence of compliance with this timeframe and will provide an update in future reporting.

1.2. Service delivery – Dangerous Goods

CFA and FRV continue to co-deliver services in CAoV, with FRV continuing to deliver dangerous goods administrative and advisory services on behalf of CFA in the CAoV. These services include, but are not limited to, statutory service delivery advice and specialist risk-based technical advisory services. CFA undertake quality assurance and final sign-off as CFA cannot lawfully delegate all required delegations to FRV employees to perform end-to-end service delivery (as noted in action 3.10).

FSIM observed a significant increase from 170 (Q1) to 180 (Q4) days to complete a referral, with the compliance rate dropping from 23 per cent (Q1) to 15 per cent (Q4) and that at the end of the reporting period, there continued to be an overall decline in performance for completion of dangerous goods referrals since the inception of the reform in 2020.

Contributing factors to the increase in time taken to complete work include FRV teams operating with reduced staff and CFA experiencing challenges in accessing the required information from FRV to enable CFA to effectively deliver on its quality assurance role. For example, over the past three years, CFA has received 57 applications from FRV for final assessment that have no, or minimal, accompanying documentation explaining the reasons for approval or otherwise. In these circumstances, CFA must go back to FRV to seek the necessary information to perform its quality assurance role. FRV further advised that the 2022 cyber security attack impacted their work on Dangerous Goods and Major Hazardous Facilities schedules as resources were re-allocated to address the cyber-attack impacts.

FSIM observes that agencies are taking action to address the information gap issue, with CFA developing a template to support FRV staff to provide the requisite documentation to allow for more efficient and informed decision-making and sign-off. FSIM also received evidence demonstrating agencies working collaboratively via the FSOC Community Safety Sub-Committee in June 2023 to develop an agreed process for this information to be provided to CFA in the future.

1.3. Service delivery – Structural Fire Safety

While FRV is responsible for service provision, CFA continues to maintain the legislative obligation to deliver structural fire safety services in CAoV as CFA cannot delegate this responsibility to FRV under the current legislative arrangements, noting that the agencies signed a deed of indemnity for the delivery of these services in 2022.

Delivery of structural fire safety services in FY 2022-23 shows an increase from 41 (Q1) to 80 (Q4) days to complete a referral, following a period of relative stability since the reform's inception, with the compliance rate decreasing from 52 per cent (Q1) to 46 per cent (Q4). These results are relatively in line with the three-year average for structural fire safety referrals however, FSIM does observe an overall decline in compliance with statutory timeframes since the inception of the reform (from 82 per cent in Q4 2020 to 46 per cent in Q4 2023).

CFA continues to work with FRV to develop Structural Fire Safety Orders (the Orders) to provide an audit framework for structural fire safety. However, at the end of the reporting period, CFA and FRV had not reached an agreement on the content of the Orders, with the main issue concerning how prescriptive the approach to service delivery should be. FSIM considers it imperative that CFA and FRV agree on service delivery standards, procedures and broader auditing framework given that CFA retains and must meet their legislative obligation for structural fire safety services.

1.4. Service delivery – Land Use Planning

The initial intent for land use planning was for CFA to retain the function within the CAoV and in FRV districts where referrals occurred within a bushfire management overlay. As a result of a transfer of

²⁹ Activation for Incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation IP.

primary resources (Fire Safety Officers) to FRV in July 2020, the responsibility currently resides with FRV under an interim and expired agreement for FRV to undertake administrative and ancillary work on behalf of CFA. CFA undertakes a quality assurance role and final sign-off as, legislatively, the function remains with CFA.

In FY 2021-22, evidence received from the Fire Safety Reforms Implementation Working Group indicated that FRV did not intend to continue providing land use planning services in the CAoV. However, CFA stated that it did not have the required resources to support this work, as the primary resources (Fire Safety Officers) responsible for this function were transferred to FRV as part of the transfer of staff on 1 July 2020. CFA and FRV commenced collaboration to transition land use planning services back to CFA, and FRV requested CFA to develop a transition plan.

At the end of the reporting period, FRV advised FSIM that it will maintain provision of land use planning services in the CAoV and will pursue an amendment to the relevant legislation to enable FRV to provide end-to-end LUP services. At the end of the reporting period, FSIM had not received evidence that this intention has been clearly communicated to CFA, and should this approach be taken, an update to the SLDA would be required.

While CFA had prepared and shared with FRV a working paper containing proposed options for ongoing delivery of land use planning by both CFA and FRV in the CAoV in June 2023, no transition plan had been completed.

Regarding delivery of land use planning services over the reporting period, FSIM observed an increase in completion days from 15 (Q1) to 17 (Q4) for land use planning referrals. FSIM also noted that compliance with statutory timeframes has slightly decreased from 89 per cent (Q1) to 86 per cent (Q4). Since the inception of the reform, there has been a decline in compliance rates for land use referrals, from 98 per cent in Q4 2020 to 86 per cent in Q4 2023.

FSIM recognises that discussions to resolve these issues are continuing and FSIM encourages the two agencies to continue collaborating to reach an agreement, clarify, and finalise the provision of land use planning services in the CAoV.

2. Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments

As at 30 June 2023, CFA and FRV had finalised two of eleven supplementary instruments supporting the Secondment Agreement (Table 14). CFA and FRV executed the 'Authorisation of expense claims' instrument and the 'Additional secondee positions' instrument in the reporting period.

FSIM observed that the 'Additional secondee positions' instrument was agreed to and executed by both CFA and FRV without having formally progressed through the Consultative Committee approval process, which contributed to delays.

FSIM notes that steps were taken in April 2023 to clarify the consultation process, including how CFA and FRV consult with each other and when FRV undertakes consultation with the UFU. However, agencies continued to experience delays in finalising remaining supplementary instruments.

For example, CFA and FRV continue to discuss supplementary instruments relating to performance and misconduct management, leave, vacancy and relief management. CFA and FRV developed a draft and agreed-in-principle position for each of these instruments, and FRV proceeded to informally consult with the UFU.

Application of the workflow, supported by clear version controls, engagement activities and transparent records of discussions should support the agencies to determine:

- what version of the document was provided for consultation and when
- where changes were made to the agreed-in-principle position before providing the document to UFU
- what discussions FRV undertook on behalf of CFA through the engagement process with UFU
- which body had proposed amendments (FRV or UFU) to the agreed-in-principle position, noting that amendments were strongly opposed by CFA.

FSIM attempted to follow the workflow, using documentation provided to HoA (e.g. tracking documents, draft instruments and discussions with agencies), however was unable to establish the above

outcomes. FSIM notes that at the end of the reporting period, CFA and FRV were in various stages of redrafting the remaining supplementary instruments, and there is an opportunity to improve the transparency of how, when and by who, changes are made to the agreed-in-principle drafts as they are revised.

3. Interoperability Procedures

Two existing IPs, 'Mutual operation command support', and 'PTA/Corporate staff support to CFA operations', were both executed in FY 2021-22. Two additional IPs, 'Activation for Incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation' and 'CFA FRV Breathing Apparatus (BA) Cylinder filling at FRV locations' were executed in FY 2022-23. Both agencies ensure that executed IPs are accessible on their respective intranets.

3.1. Activation for Incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation Interoperability Procedure

As outlined in the SLDA and related schedule, FRV provides services to CFA relating to structural fire investigation. CFA and FRV agreed an IP was needed for incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigations in CAoV. This IP was executed in January 2023. CFA and FRV issued joint communications following the execution of the 'Activation for Incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation' IP.

3.2. CFA FRV Breathing Apparatus (BA) Cylinder filling at FRV locations Interoperability Procedure

As noted in the FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, BA support issues were highlighted at some regional stations, with volunteers advising they were not authorised to access and refill their BA cylinders at a neighbouring FRV-owned refilling station. FSIM further noted that action 2.4 in the FSOC workplan required FSOC to develop a draft roadmap for a BA operating model (including BA recharging plans) to enable FRV to meet obligations for maintaining and servicing under the SLDA.

In FY 2022-23, the FSOC Protective Equipment Sub-Committee developed an IP to provide process and guidance for CFA BA Cylinder filling at FRV locations. The IP further supports the arrangements outlined in the SLDA and was executed in February 2023. FSIM notes this IP addresses a key concern raised by volunteer firefighters in FSIM's year two engagement.

In Q4, the FSOC Policy and Doctrine Interoperability Subcommittee completed a gap analysis against the Joint Standard Operating Procedures (JSOPs) and Joint Operational Activities MoU. The findings were with agencies for feedback with the intention to develop an endorsed workplan to FSOC. The gap analysis will provide recommendations for review, new development or archiving of old JSOPs. As such, seven IPs listed at Table 15 are noted as "under review" as they were being analysed as part of the gap analysis.

FRV drafted an IP on pre-incident response planning related to site-specific risk information to support a joint approach and to include local knowledge when responding to incidents. FSIM acknowledges that this work responds to issues raised through FSIM's FY 2021-22 engagement program relating to the inclusion of local knowledge in FRV responses.³⁰

CFA and FRV intend that the Doctrine sub-committee of FSOC will have an ongoing role to develop, review and harmonise joint operational doctrine as a BAU activity. FSIM notes that at the end of the reporting period, the Doctrine Sub-Committee was developing an initial draft of IP 'CFA/FRV Pre Incident Response Site Specific Risk Information' and no additional IPs had been directed to the Doctrine Sub-Committee from FSOC.

A summary of IP status is outlined at Table 15.

Findings

Overall, FSIM finds action 3.9 is progressing, however there are a number of risks and issues that should be considered as agencies continue to work through action deliverables.

³⁰Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 59.

Overall decline in compliance with statutory referral timeframes where services are co-delivered

As noted in the FSIM Annual Report 2021/22, there is no formal, agreed understanding of complementary fire services and how that translates to individual agency service provision under the SLDA schedules to ensure the best outcome for the community. Agencies continue to rely on interim arrangements, which have now been in place for three years and are impacting service provision standards.

FSIM has observed that for the SLDA schedules that remain outstanding, require FRV to provide services, and require CFA to undertake quality assurance and final sign off due to the current legislative arrangements, compliance with statutory timeframes has declined overall (from 92 per cent in Q4 2020 to 79 per cent in Q4 2023).

There are possible risks associated with these delays to referral completion. For example, an incident may occur due to a safety issue while the site is waiting for fire service advice. FSIM received information from FRV stating that this risk is managed by triaging referral work, with priority given to:

- sites that WorkSafe Victoria have reported to FRV has an issue
- issues that have been identified by local fire crews
- sites featured on WorkSafe Victoria's Dangerous Goods Strategic Inspection list.

FSIM finds that work to finalise schedules commenced in October 2020 and remains incomplete. While the SLDAs were executed at the commencement of fire services reform, the development of underpinning schedules to provide clarity of service delivery is complex and requires time, resources and clear direction (based on agreed underlying principles of a complementary fire service) to guide development and implementation.

Allocation of functions contradicts legislative responsibilities for some schedules

CFA and FRV acknowledge that, in some instances, what was set out initially in the SLDAs is not workable. For example, CFA is unable to lawfully delegate powers to FRV for end-to-end service delivery for Dangerous Goods services.

As such, a decision is required on a pathway forward for how these services will be delivered (e.g., maintain a co-delivery arrangement or transfer the function to a single agency and make the required legislative changes). Depending on the agreement of service delivery arrangements, government could then determine a pathway forward on the need to amend relevant legislation.

Application of the consultation workflow

Agency transparency throughout the development of schedules and supplementary instruments is key to the successful delivery as these difficult negotiations continue. Agencies can achieve this by consistently applying the agreed workflow, providing clear version controls on documentation, and providing transparent records of negotiation discussions with stakeholders.

For example, FSIM considers it may be useful at the "Key Stakeholder Engagement" step of HoA's workflow, that:

- CFA and FRV formally confirm the 'agreed-in-principle' position – e.g. via a "request to consult" paper submitted to and approved by HoA
- CFA and FRV provide each other with a dated copy of the document that is sent for consultation, approved by both agencies
- that a summary of discussions had with UFU be provided to enable HoA to consider next steps.

At the end of the reporting period (and noting the process had been in place for three months), FSIM believes there is a risk that changes could be made by an agency (i.e., amending the 'agreed-in-principle' position) ahead of consultation without the other party being made aware. The issue of clarity of the final agreed position has been raised at HoA and agencies were considering options for improving transparency.

FSIM will seek evidence in Year 4 that demonstrates both agencies working in accordance with the agreed workflow, based on an established the agreed-in-principle position and being transparent with each other on the progress through consultation activities.

Ambitious completion dates for supplementary instruments to the Secondment Agreement

FSIM finds that CFA and FRV have revised completion dates for the majority of schedules and supplementary instruments to 30 September 2023. Given the challenges to date in finalising these instruments, particularly those supplementary instruments to the secondment agreement, these dates are ambitious.

FSIM finds that for supplementary instruments to the secondment agreements, there are instruments (specifically performance management, leave, vacancy and relief management) that will likely take significant negotiation to complete due to the intersection with and obligations under the relevant EAs.

Interoperability Procedures

FSIM finds that the program of work to review and update IPs is complex and requires significant resources and subject matter experts. CFA and FRV have experienced ongoing issues with resource availability to support the Doctrine sub-committee of FSOC to complete this work. Given the significant role IPs play in harmonising service delivery, where practical and fit for purpose to support effective operations, FSIM will continue to closely monitor and seek evidence and data on IP development and FSOC's ability to progress this work in future reports.

Opportunity to review and consolidate activity under actions 3.7, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11

FSIM finds that there are overlaps in deliverables between actions 3.7, 3.9, 3.10 and, by extension, 3.11. As outlined in FSIM's recommendation number five in Section 3 of this report, a review of the Year Two to Five Plan should consider which remaining implementation plan activities most significantly contribute to the intended success at year five for each priority area and be updated, with pragmatic and achievable timelines, to focus on those activities. The review should be guided by the broader outcomes in the Fire Services Statement, leverage a shared definition of complementary fire services and consider the impacts of other enabling instruments (e.g., Secondment Agreement, legislation).

Table 13: Status of Overarching Operational Services Agreement, Service Level Deeds Agreements and schedules, as at 30 June 2023

Agreement/ Schedules	Status	Notes on schedules	Proposed Due Date
Overarching Operational Services Agreement	Executed 30 June 2020		
Service Level Deed of Agreement – CFA	Executed 30 June 2020		
Service Level Deed of Agreement – FRV	Executed 30 June 2020		
Alarm assessment	Executed 30 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV agreed to manage alarm assessments within their own respective areas A Letter of Agreement between CFA and FRV replaces the need for a schedule for this service 	
Structural Fire Investigation	Executed 30 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV executed the Structural Fire Investigation schedule (schedule 2) in January 2023 CFA and FRV prepared an IP for incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation to support arrangements in this schedule 	

Agreement/ Schedules	Status	Notes on schedules	Proposed Due Date
Bushfire Fire Investigation	Executed 30 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV executed the Bushfire Fire Investigation schedule (schedule 3) in January 2023 CFA and FRV prepared an IP for incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation to support arrangements in this schedule 	
Dangerous goods	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA cannot delegate end to end service delivery to FRV. CFA currently drafting proposal for the delivery of caravan parks and moveable dwellings services. FRV continues to provide advisory services in CAoV, with additional measures developed to ensure FRV assessment documentation will be provided in all cases for CFA final assessment and sign-off. A decision is needed on whether to make legislative changes to delegate powers or if CFA continues to provide quality assurance and approval of dangerous goods advisory services in CAoV 	30 September 2023
Building inspection and compliance (structural fire safety)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements are in place for FRV to deliver structural fire safety services end to end. CFA drafted an Instrument of Authorisation to authorise named employees of FRV to access land and buildings (in the CAoV) to inspect, assess and report back to the Authority on structural fire safety compliance matters CFA and FRV will formalise arrangements in a schedule. 	30 September 2023
Land use planning	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLDA requires CFA to deliver the services however the full suite of Fire Services Officers responsible for this work was transferred to FRV in 2020 FRV is currently delivering administrative and ancillary services on behalf of CFA under an interim arrangement In FY 2021-22, FRV has advised CFA that it does not intend to provide land use planning services in the CAoV on an ongoing basis. As a result, CFA and FRV were developing a possible transition plan for CFA to resume providing services. In FY 2022-23, FRV has advised FSIM of its intention to maintain its provision of land use planning services in the CAoV and to pursue an amendment to relevant legislation. FRV has yet to provide evidence of discussion of this intention with CFA. 	30 September 2023

Agreement/ Schedules	Status	Notes on schedules	Proposed Due Date
Communications technical services	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV are currently drafting a service level agreement as part of the schedule process 	30 September 2023
District mechanical officers	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV are currently drafting a service level agreement as part of the schedule process 	30 September 2023
Fire services communication control	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing schedule does not reflect the pre-reform duties of CFA's FSCC and lacks detail on the requirements of the role CFA and FRV are currently drafting an updated schedule FRV seeks to update the schedule on the basis of services and not personnel 	30 September 2023
Protective equipment	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV agreed in principle to the tenancy agreement for the PE Department and the transfer of tools of trade for PE technicians CFA and FRV intend to develop a schedule that will include a service delivery plan to underpin the arrangements in the SLDA 	30 September 2023
Specialist response instructors	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist instructors are not seconded back to CFA but rather provide a service CFA will outline specialist training requirements as part of its capability planning process CFA requirements will then inform the development of a schedule 	30 September 2023
Tower overseer services	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV are currently drafting a service level agreement as part of the schedule process 	30 September 2023

Table 14: Status of Secondment Agreement and supplementary instruments as at 30 June 2023

Secondment Agreement/ supplementary instruments	Status	Notes on supplementary instruments	Proposed due date
Secondment Agreement	Executed 31 October 2020		
Leave management	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft instrument was previously tabled at HoA and provided to UFU for final consultation Scope of instrument subsequently changed – relief management and vacancy management were separated into individual supplementary instruments Additional leave management guidance is being prepared for inclusion CFA, FRV and UFU continue to progress development 	30 September 2023

Secondment Agreement/ supplementary instruments	Status	Notes on supplementary instruments	Proposed due date
Performance and misconduct management	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft instrument was tabled at HoA during the reporting period FRV subsequently updated the document, in consultation with CFA FRV entered into the consultation process with UFU CFA did not agree with the revised instrument following stakeholder consultation, noting the proposed amendments fettered the powers of the CO, CFA CFA, FRV and UFU continue to work through a position that can be supported by all parties 	30 September 2023
Relief management	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following agreement to separate the leave, relief, and vacancy management supplementary instrument into three separate instruments, CFA drafted a supplementary instrument and several workflows to identify how relief is sourced for secondment positions. CFA has prepared a draft and included guidance on how relief is managed across all seconded positions to ensure consistency across the State CFA provided this to FRV for initial comment at the end of the reporting period 	30 September 2023
Vacancy management	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following agreement to separate the leave, relief, and vacancy management supplementary instrument into three separate instruments, CFA drafted a supplementary instrument for vacancy management with updated workflows for secondment positions Consultation with stakeholders is underway, noting there are significant differences arising through consultation regarding the CO, CFA's role in approving a candidate for secondment CFA and FRV continue to work through a position that can be supported by all parties 	30 September 2023
Dispute and grievance resolution	Not yet started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational EBA provides guidance, noting CFA and FRV address matters as they arise in the absence of an agreed supplementary instrument Work will be required to develop workflows to underpin the instrument 	30 September 2023
OHS reporting and WorkSafe	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies are working to streamline Occupational Health and Safety reporting and WorkSafe issues 	30 September 2023

Secondment Agreement/ supplementary instruments	Status	Notes on supplementary instruments	Proposed due date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA is currently reviewing FRV amendments ahead of finalising the instrument 	
Additional secondees positions	Executed 2 December 2022	Completed	
Professional development	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV need to establish guidelines and process for professional development opportunities for secondees FRV is redrafting instrument 	30 December 2023
Authorisation of expense claims	Executed 2 December 2022	Completed	
Consultation process	Not yet started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational EBA provides guidance Workflow needs to be developed to outline consultation and escalation processes 	30 December 2023
Tools of trade	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work required to develop a clear, streamlined and user-friendly approach FRV is redrafting instrument for CFA review 	30 September 2023

Table 15: Status of Interoperability Procedures as at 30 June 2023

Interoperability Procedures	Status
Initial response and escalation for mutual aid	Under Review
Communications	Under Review
Command and control	Under Review
Liaison officers	Under Review
CFA step up / move to FRV stations	Under Review
FRV step up – move to CFA stations	Under Review
Strike team / task forces	Under Review
CFA/FRV pre-incident response plans	Initial draft under development
Request and use of state fleet aircraft by FRV	Superseded by State arrangements under the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture: Interagency Aviation Operating Procedure – Obtaining Aircraft
Request and use of state fleet and call when needed reconnaissance aircraft by FRV	Superseded by State arrangements under the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture: Interagency Aviation Operating Procedure – Obtaining Aircraft
Mutual operational command support	Executed
PTA/Corporate staff support to CFA operations	Executed
Activation for incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation	New, Executed 16 January 2023
CFA BA Cylinder filling at FRV stations	New, Executed 14 February 2023

Action 3.10: Where practical and appropriate, finalise any delegation authorisations between CFA and FRV to support the operationalisation of the Service Level Deeds of Agreement (SLDA) and schedules.

Action objective: Delegation authorisations between CFA and FRV, where permitted, are fit for purpose. These will enable both agencies to provide services to the community effectively and efficiently.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to finalise the relevant delegations to enable FRV service provision in the CAoV, as specified in the Service Level Deeds of Agreement (SLDA) and schedules relating to the provision of following services/legislation:

1. Fire investigation
2. Dangerous Goods
3. Structural Fire Safety
4. Caravan Parks
5. Land Use Planning
6. *Building Act 1993* (Building Act).

FRV requires legislative and regulatory powers and authority to be delegated by CFA, where appropriate, to FRV staff seconded to deliver these services in CAoV.

As noted in the FSIM's Annual Report 2020/21, to support the fire services reform intention of interoperability across the fire services, it was agreed that FRV would provide support to CFA in CFA Districts and CFA would provide surge capacity and back-up response in FRV response areas.³¹ The provision of services between CFA and FRV is outlined broadly in the SLDA, with further detail provided in a suite of schedules to the SLDA included in action 3.9.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. The status of delegations for the respective services/legislation is outlined in Table 16. CFA continues to undertake work to determine whether delegations/authorisations can be provided to FRV to deliver services on behalf of CFA as outlined in the SLDAs.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.10 is partially implemented as three areas of delegation remain in progress, and FSIM has received no evidence demonstrating an intent to change relevant legislation to enable delegations to be made. The SLDAs outlined the initial intent for service provision by agencies for various services. However, some of these intentions are not able to be realised in practice and require either legislative change or dedicated resources to facilitate end-to-end service delivery.

FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 recommended that agencies should develop an agreed definition of complementary fire services and how this translates to individual service delivery, underpinned by agreed principles to guide the finalisation of outstanding agreements.³² For the outstanding delegations, such principles could underpin a decision to either change legislation, maintain current work arounds, or allocate additional resources.

³¹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2021, *Annual Report 2020/21 Year One: Setting the foundations*, Victorian Government, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2020-21>>, pg. 64.

³²Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 9.

CFA has determined this action to be complete as delegations/authorisations have been provided to FRV where possible under the current legislative arrangements. Where new arrangements are established under action 3.9, CFA will ensure that delegations and authorisations are reviewed and updated to support the agreed arrangements established under the SLDA.


FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Table 16: Summary of delegations status as at 30 June 2023

Delegations	Status	Notes on in progress actions
1. Fire Investigation	Completed	N/A
2. Dangerous Goods – Access to land, buildings and premises in CAoV	Completed	N/A
3. Dangerous Goods – Provision of end-to-end service delivery in the CAoV	In progress	<p>CFA cannot lawfully delegate all required delegations to FRV employees to perform end-to-end service delivery. Agencies are reviewing processes.</p> <p>In the absence of finalised delegations, CFA and FRV continue to co-deliver services in CAoV, with FRV providing administrative and ancillary services and CFA undertaking quality assurance and sign off. The impact of this interim process is outlined in more detail at action 3.9.</p>
4. Structural Fire Safety – Building Act and Regulations	Completed	<p>CFA tabled the approved Instrument of delegation and instrument of authorisation for structural fire safety services for FRV employees at HoA in August 2022. FRV commenced end to end service delivery of structural fire safety services on 8 August 2022.</p> <p>Whilst FRV is responsible for service provision, CFA continues to maintain the legislative obligation for delivery of structural fire safety services in CAoV.</p>
5. Caravan Parks	In progress	<p>CFA is unable to lawfully delegate several powers under the <i>Residential Tenancies Regulations 2020</i> to FRV for caravan parks and moveable dwellings. CFA is therefore unable to enact arrangements outlined in the SLDA for FRV to deliver caravan park and moveable dwellings fire safety compliance. Due to these legislative constraints CFA is drafting a proposal to FRV for CFA to deliver these services end to end in the CAoV.</p>
6. Land Use Planning	In progress	<p>As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2020/21³³ and FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22³⁴, the intent of the SLDA in relation to land use planning services was for CFA to continue to provide services in CAoV and provide expertise on Bushfire Management Overlay areas in the FRV District. However, all CFA Fire Safety Officers who performed this work were transferred to FRV as part of reform restructures.</p> <p>CFA is unable to delegate some of its legislative powers to FRV for land use planning services in the CAoV.</p>

³³ Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2021, *Annual Report 2020/21 Year One: Setting the foundations*, Victorian Government, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2020-21https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2020-21>>, pg. 59.

³⁴ Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 56.



Delegations	Status	Notes on in progress actions
		At the end of the reporting period, services in CAoV continue to be co-delivered between CFA and FRV, with FRV providing administrative and ancillary services and CFA undertaking quality assurance and sign off.
7. Building Act and Regulations	Completed	N/A

Action 3.11: CFA to ensure internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the SLDA and schedules.

Action objective: Internal policies and procedures support SLDA and schedule arrangements.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2024	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to develop internal policies to support SLDA and schedule arrangements. Key action deliverables for action 3.11 are duplicated in action 3.9:

1. Review and update of Interoperability Procedures (IPs) underpinning the CFA/FRV Joint Operational Activity MOU.
2. Harmonisation of operational doctrine via the established doctrine working group.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. FSIM notes that key deliverables for action 3.11, are replicated in action 3.9. Work in action 3.9 continues. FSIM understands that CFA intends to update the deliverables for action 3.9 to ensure CFA's internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the OOSA, SLDA and Schedules, Secondment Agreement and Supplementary Instruments.

1. Review and update Interoperability Procedures underpinning the CFA/FRV Joint Operational Activity Memorandum of Understanding

The FSOC Doctrine Sub-Committee is accountable for maintaining IPs, including coordination of new procedures and periodical review of existing procedures.³⁵ The Sub-Committee acknowledges the review is a large program of work requiring significant resourcing and subject matter expertise. In reviewing IPs. The Sub-Committee found one IP that was no longer relevant in the new operating environment³⁶ and that two new IPs needed to be developed to address changes brought about by reform - the 'Activation for Incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation' and 'CFA FRV BA Cylinder filling at FRV locations' and are outlined in further detail in action 3.7.

Due to limited CFA resourcing, FRV is currently taking the lead on reviewing the IPs and notes that some previous Joint Standard Operating Procedures (JSOPs) will no longer be relevant in the new operating environment. Once a review is completed, relevant IPs will be updated to reflect current practices and processing.

In Q4 FY 2022-23, the FSOC Policy and Doctrine Interoperability Subcommittee completed a gap analysis against current IPs and existing JSOPs and identified associated gaps. The findings were with agencies for feedback with the intention to develop an endorsed workplan to FSOC. The gap analysis will provide recommendations related to the review, new IP development or archiving of old JSOPs.


2. Harmonise operational doctrine via the established doctrine working group

The FSOC Doctrine Sub-Committee is accountable for coordinating the development, consultation, approval and implementation of any doctrine or policy that is required between CFA and FRV to guide operational activity.³⁷ The Sub-Committee is currently focused on the review and update of IPs but intends to (as BAU), develop a workplan and processes for ongoing harmonisation of operational doctrine. As outlined in the action 3.9 progress summary, CFA and FRV worked collaboratively to prepare a process workflow to outline the approval process for IPs SLDA schedules and Secondment Agreement supplementary instruments to improve transparency and support a consistent approach. FSIM noted evidence that this process will be adapted to underpin ongoing harmonisation of CFA and

³⁵ Doctrine FRV/CFA FSOC Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.

³⁶ The Aviation IP which is now covered under State Aviation doctrine.

³⁷ Doctrine FRV/CFA FSOC Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.



FRV operational doctrine via the Doctrine Sub-Committee, which will allow for consistency of approach between the operational governance (FSOC) and strategic governance (HoA).

3. Ensure internal policies and procedures support the arrangements in the Service Level Deeds of Agreement and schedules

As outlined in the action 3.9 progress summary, work to finalise some of the SLDA schedules is significantly delayed. CFA advises that, following completion of the development of the SLDA schedules, CFA intends to undertake an analysis of both SLDAs and all schedules against internal policies and procedures to ensure alignment, noting this work has not yet started.

While there remains a considerable number of SLDA schedules outstanding, there is a process through FSOC (and its sub-committees) to ensure accountability for coordinating the development, consultation, approval and implementation of any joint doctrine or policy that is required between CFA and FRV to guide operational activity.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.11 is implemented, given CFA intend to update the deliverables for action 3.9 to ensure CFA's internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the OOSA, SLDA and Schedules, Secondment Agreement and Supplementary Instruments and given there is an accountability structure in place via action 3.7.

FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

Action 3.12: Finalise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalise ongoing support service requirements.

Action objective: CFA and FRV support service requirements are met through an MOU that is fit for purpose.

Lead agency: CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA and FRV to develop an MoU to formalise ongoing support service arrangements.

As outlined in the FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, the scope of this action has evolved over time.³⁸ The action was initially intended to document the transition of specified functions between CFA and FRV following reform. CFA and FRV agreed to revise the scope of this action to focus on closing out as many transitional arrangements as possible and creating a new contemporary MOU for discrete corporate services.

Progress summary

Following an audit of the transitional activities listed in the original draft MOU, CFA and FRV met in August 2022 to discuss the next steps.

CFA and FRV agreed to develop an Information Sharing MOU and three separate agreements relating to ICT services, property management and fleet maintenance services.

1. Information sharing Memorandum of Understanding

CFA and FRV collaborated to prepare a draft version of the MOU in May 2023 and are progressing the draft MOU through their respective formal consultation processes.

The MOU sets out the parties' mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities regarding information sharing for the purposes of carrying out the corporate functions that support their statutory objectives. The MOU includes two schedules - an Information Protocol that sets out the details and processes to manage information requests and a template for responding to information requests. It is intended that CFA and FRV will review the MOU every five years.

2. Information Communication Technology services Service level agreement

CFA is leading work to define requirements for an ICT services service level agreement.

3. Fleet maintenance Service level agreement

CFA and FRV prepared a draft Fleet Maintenance Service Agreement to underpin Appendix 12 of the transitional arrangement MOU (which was not executed) for CFA to provide firefighting vehicle maintenance services for those appliances transferred to CFA from FRV as part of reform. The Service Level Agreement sets out the terms on which CFA will provide the services. As at the end of the reporting period, this agreement had not yet been finalised and CFA advised that the governance arrangements for FSR doctrine will need to be approved before finalising this agreement.

4. Property management Service level agreement

CFA is leading work to define requirements for a property management service level agreement.

Findings

FSIM finds action 3.12 is progressing.

³⁸Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 54.

6.4 Priority four actions

Context

Priority Four of the Year Two to Five Plan contains 10 actions that have the shared outcome of “Valuing our people”. The following section provides a progress summary for each Priority Four action.

Progress of actions

Action 4.1: Appoint the Firefighters Registration Board (FRB).

Action objective: The secondment model is collaboratively supported and regulated by an independent entity.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	August 2023	In progress – minor delays

Context

This action requires DJCS, in consultation with CFA and FRV, in accordance with the relevant sections of the FRV Act 1958, establish an independent entity that supports and regulates the fire services secondment model.

Progress summary

Evidence received demonstrates that formalising the Regulations has taken longer than initially anticipated. In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved DJCS’s change request to extend the due date for this action to August 2023 to enable finalisation of the Regulations and subsequent election and appointment processes that conform to the requirements specified in the Regulations.

DJCS developed a project plan to guide the development of the Regulations, and the Firefighters Registration Board Working Group provided governance oversight until the Regulations were settled. The Regulations came into effect on 1 December 2022 and are publicly available.³⁹ As at 30 June 2023, the election and appointment process for members of the independent FRB had commenced in line with the processes outlined in the Regulations. At the end of the reporting period, the appointment process was ongoing, with DJCS continuing to provide administrative support to establish the FRB.

FSIM notes the Regulations support the FRB provisions in the FRV Act⁴⁰ and the secondment model by providing additional structure and guidance with respect to:

- requirements for the appointment of members of the FRB under the Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958
- the process for the election of nominees of “former senior firefighter and academic” for appointment to the FRB
- other matters necessary to allow the FRB to discharge its duties under the FRV Act.

In November 2021, due to the imminent and ongoing need to fill vacancies to provide operational and management support to CFA in the CAoV and given the Regulations to support the establishment of the FRB were not yet completed, FRV established, with the agreement of the UFU, a committee titled the Victorian Professional Career Firefighters Registration Board (VPCFRB) pursuant to the Operational Employees EA. FRV advised that role of this committee was to assess and register any lateral entry candidates for employment by FRV for the purpose of being offered as secondees, pursuant to section 25B of the FRV Act, while the FRB was being established.

In addition, and as FSIM noted in its Annual Report 2021/22, in March 2022 during the development of the draft Regulations, UFU created a body corporate called the Victorian Professional Career

³⁹ [Fire Rescue Victoria \(Firefighters Registration Board\) Regulations 2022](#)

⁴⁰ The FRB is established under s149 of the FRV Act 1958

Firefighters Registration Board Ltd. (VPCFRB Ltd). FSIM understands that this UFU-led VPCFRB Ltd is intended to register career firefighters from ranks covered by the operational staff agreement, employed by FRV. FSIM further understands that the VPCFRB's intended scope and functions are broader than those of the FRB and FRV's internal Board.

The VPCFRB Ltd is currently the subject of FWC proceedings that commenced in March 2022 relating to a dispute between the UFU and FRV in which the Minister subsequently intervened.⁴¹ Due to this dispute and pursuant to FRV's consultation obligations under the Operational Employees EA, FRV was not able to make a final formal submission in respect of the proposed Regulations in July 2022 upon the request of the CEO of EMV. However, FSIM notes there was constructive FRV officer-level engagement in the Regulations development process over the months preceding the FWC proceedings.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.1 is progressing.

FSIM observes that the Year Two to Five Plan actions to develop and maintain a secondment strategy that details CFA's capability and capacity needs from FRV (action 5.1) and FRV's Workforce Plan (action 5.4) may provide further insights for the FRB. The output from these actions will be important matters for consideration for the FRB (once established), given that CFA has no formal mechanism to require that secondees have certain competencies or skillsets beyond relying on s7(1)(bb) of the FRV Act.⁴²

As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, the establishment of a separate registration body for career firefighters may risk duplicative, overlapping, or inconsistent registration functions and requirements.⁴³

As per the intent of action 4.1, once the FRB is established, FSIM encourages the FRB, in consultation with CFA, DJCS and FRV, to consider and discuss the implications of possible dual registration approaches to ensure the best outcomes for staff seconded to CFA and to ensure that CFA's needs are being met through the registration approach.

⁴¹ Victorian Government Printer, 2023, *Victorian Government Gazette, G41, 13 October 2022*, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2022/GG2022G041.pdf#page=23>>, pg. 4103

⁴² Section 7(1)(bb) of the FRV Act requires FRV to provide operational and management support to CFA in consultation with and as agreed by CFA to meet CFA's objective under section 6B of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, including support to maintain, strengthen and encourage the capability of volunteers.

⁴³ Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 78.

Action 4.2: Establish capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the firefighters register, application processes and transparent appeals processes.

Action objective: FRB provides for and maintains a transparent and fit for purpose registration of FRV staff suitable for secondment to CFA.

Lead agency: FRB

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	December 2024	Not commenced

Context

This action requires FRB, once in place, to establish capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the firefighters register, application processes and transparent appeals processes, consistent with their functions outlined in s154 of the FRV Act 1958 and consistent with the *Fire Rescue Victoria (Firefighters Registration Board) Regulations 2022*.

Progress summary

This action had yet to commence as the FRB membership was not yet finalised. Progress on the establishment of the FRB is outlined in action 4.1.

When all roles in the FRB are confirmed, FSIM considers that effective engagement with CFA, FRV and other relevant emergency management and fire services authorities will be critical to successfully delivering this action. Key inputs for consideration by the FRB in establishing competency standards include Year Two to Five Plan deliverables relating to capability (specifically, actions 5.1 and 5.4). FSIM considers action 4.2 will support FRV in meeting its legislative requirements under s7(1)(bb) of the FRV Act to provide operational and management support to CFA, including support to maintain, strengthen and encourage the capability of volunteers. It will also support FRV in meeting its obligations under the Secondment Agreement to provide CFA with operational and management support, including administrative, training, community safety and fire safety support.

Findings

Action 4.2 has not yet commenced.

Action 4.3: Complete delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project.

Action objective: Through delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program, CFA volunteers are skilled and capable, and feel safe and supported.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2024	June 2024	In progress – significant delays

Context

This action requires CFA to deliver the Volunteer Health and Safety Initiatives Program. This program includes the following initiatives:

1. Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial Project
2. Wildfire Personal Protective Clothing (Wildfire PPC) Project
3. Safety Compliance Program.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported delays and advised that this action will not be completed by June 2024 due to COVID-19 supply chain disruptions, staffing constraints and industrial action. As a result, CFA intended to submit a 12-month action extension request to the Minister.

CFA has provided evidence to confirm progress for initiatives under the Volunteer Health and Safety Initiatives Programs as at 30 June 2023:

1. Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial Project

The Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial Project aims to enhance wildfire protection for volunteers by reducing the occurrence of harmful smoke inhalation through the evaluation and implementation of respiratory equipment options. Outcomes of the project will lead to recommendations to inform potential procurement of wildfire respiratory protection devices.

This project was informed by research on Wildfire Respiratory Protection Devices reported in 2021 and conducted in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.⁴⁴

In FY 2022-23, CFA initiated a Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial, with governance oversight provided by the General Manager Infrastructure Services. The trial involved selected CFA participants testing wildfire respiratory protection devices in the field. CFA will collect survey results on device usability to inform respiratory device suitability and recommendations to inform potential procurement of wildfire respiratory protection devices.

FSIM notes that COVID-19 restrictions impacted the progress of this project, and the project continues to experience delays. CFA expects that this project will be completed by June 2024.

2. Wildfire Personal Protective Clothing Project

The Wildfire PPC project aims to update CFA's current Wildfire PPC (introduced in 2002) with ergonomics and firefighter safety improvements. CFA aims to provide 24,000 sets of modern Wildfire PPC to CFA operational volunteers. Consultation occurred with volunteers and VFBV on the project, and included wearer trials involving 40 firefighters. All CFA districts received sizing sets to undertake CFA member Wildfire PPC sizing.

As at 30 June 2023, CFA has entered into a procurement contract for the manufacture and supply of Wildfire PPC. CFA anticipates that the project will be completed by June 2024.

⁴⁴Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 77.

3. Safety Compliance Program

The Safety Compliance Program aims to improve the health and safety of CFA firefighters by targeting three projects: Low Voltage Fuse Removal (LVFR), Safe Working at Heights (SWH), and Alternative Power Systems. CFA provided evidence confirming that they had collaborated with FRV to develop the LVFR and SWH projects. Additionally, FRV staff trainer and assessors were used to deliver SWH training at times.

The CFA Safety Compliance Steering Committee governs and provides oversight of the Safety Compliance Program. Based on progress reports provided, the delivery of the Safety Compliance Program has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, particularly the LVFR and SWH projects. Additionally, evidence received demonstrated that multiple secondees with the knowledge and experience required to deliver the program have been reassigned. Consequently, this has delayed the delivery of the program.

3.1. Low Voltage Fuse Removal

The LVFR project aims to train, accredit and equip CFA operational members in the removal of low voltage fuses and general electrical safety that can be applied in emergency response situations.

Prior to this project, accredited CFA members to undertake a reaccreditation course every three years. With the introduction of the LVFR project, CFA transitioned to a skills maintenance approach, which enables CFA members to maintain their accreditation through regular training under the LVFR project. This skills maintenance package was released to CFA members in June 2023.

Although COVID-19 disruptions slowed the pace of LVFR training and led to the postponement of training for some brigades (particularly in FY 2021-22), 468 brigades received LVFR training and equipment out of a total 610 scoped, with 121 brigades trained in FY 2022-23.

This project also requires CFA appliances to be fitted with appropriate equipment for LVFR response. CFA completed 329 LVFR vehicle modifications as at June 2023. However, CFA District Mechanical Officer industrial bans since March 2023 continued to impact works required to equip vehicles with LVFR modifications. This industrial ban may contribute to further delays to the completion of the LVFR project.

3.2. Safe working at heights

The SWH project aims to mitigate health and safety risks for CFA members working at heights. This project trains CFA members and equips brigades for response activities such as specialist rope rescue and safety systems to manage falls from heights. CFA was the only emergency service organisation in Victoria without a SWH system in place, and this project aims to fill this gap to meet Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.⁴⁵

This project has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 disruptions, particularly in FY 2021-22. CFA provided evidence that this disruption affected training prop manufacture and supply. Local council planning permit delays and industrial consultation requirements under the FRV Operational EA further impacted progress of this project.

CFA reported that FRV has been unable to allocate sufficient trainers and assessors to deliver CFA's SWH training schedule and meet the CFA target of 240 trained brigades. To address this issue, in May 2023, CFA entered into an MOU with Victorian State Emergency Service (VICSES) to deliver SWH training to CFA brigades.


As at 30 June 2023, a total of 67 brigades have received SWH training and equipment, with the remaining brigades scheduled to receive training by December 2024.

3.3. Alternative Power Systems

The Alternative Power Systems project aims to build skills and capabilities in mitigating risks to firefighters and bystanders when attending incidents that require the disconnection of Alternative Power Systems such as solar panels, batteries and electric vehicles.

As at 30 June 2023, CFA was evaluating a solar panel safety solution and developing information videos on electrical vehicle firefighting response. Information sheets have been developed to guide firefighters

⁴⁵Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 76.



in operational response to incidents such as thermal runaway (lithium-ion batteries), battery energy storage systems, and electrical vehicle fires. CFA also shared Alternative Power Systems doctrine and awareness packages with FRV.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.3 is progressing and notes that the Safety Compliance Program is at risk of not meeting the Year Two to Five Plan completion date of June 2024.

Action 4.4: Define FRV values and culture and deliver supporting programs of work: (a) Develop FRV values; (b) Strategy to embed FRV values; and (c) Leadership development and capability.

Action objective: FRV has defined values and programs that support leadership, relationships and the way it operates.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires FRV to define its values and culture and deliver specific programs, demonstrating that its values and culture are sustained through organisational programs, practices and behaviours, subject to ongoing monitoring and review, are owned by FRV people, and guide work, decisions, actions and behaviours.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, FRV settled and presented its final values package to staff in June 2022.⁴⁶ In Year Three of reform, FRV designed an "Outcomes and Values Program" to align what FRV does (outlined in the FRV Strategy – action 5.3) with its values. FRV's intended outcomes for this Values program are:

- providing Victorians with a relevant, contemporary fire and rescue service
- a united FRV with shared values and a common purpose of serving and protecting the Victorian community.

FRV prepared a three-year roadmap for embedding FRV values as "Values in Action". FRV also developed supporting project plans that outline milestones, risks, mitigations, and program ownership for the two programs under this action. Governance oversight is provided by FRV's ELT and People and Culture directorate and includes two programs of work:

- "Developing FRV Values" to establish FRV Values that underpin work, are owned and embraced by FRV staff, and guide FRV's everyday work, decisions, actions and behaviours without compromise. The project was completed and signed off by FRV's ELT and the Consultative Committee in June 2022.
- The "Embedding FRV Values" program is currently underway, with an anticipated completion date of December 2024. The FY 2022-23 focus of this program was on enabling leadership and staff to lead and shape culture and model behaviours. FRV's FY 2023-2024 focus will be on aligning policies, processes and systems, and developing metrics to report progress and share successes across the organisation. Specific deliverables include:
 - integrating FRV values into recruitment, onboarding and retention, with a values statement included in job advertisements and position descriptions, and asking values-based questions in interviews
 - integrating values into performance appraisals, with Executive Officer performance objectives now linked to FRV Values
 - establishing the "FRV Values hub" with information for leaders and crews/teams to apply the new values practically. This Hub provides a starter set of tools and resources, such as a "Values in Action Guide" and a "Values Team Talk Tool" for staff.

In Year Three, as part of the "Embedding FRV Values" program of work, FRV developed draft output metrics and targets to gauge the progress and measure the effectiveness of the implementation

⁴⁶Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 95.

program. As these measures become more defined, FSIM may consider them as part of its effectiveness assessment in future years.

FRV undertook engagement with staff across all levels of the organisation to inform the development and delivery of these programs. FSIM notes that FRV:

- convened three Senior Leaders Forums on FRV 'Values in Action' with senior leaders, including FRV staff seconded to CFA (84 participants), in September 2022. An additional online session was held for the remaining senior leaders in November 2022. These sessions reached 120 senior leaders (ACFO, Director and above)
- conducted Values in Action Workshops with Commanders, Managers, and SO/SSOs from December 2022 to March 2023. These sessions engaged crews and teams across all FRV stations and worksites in developing FRV values and related behavioural descriptors
- undertook dedicated secondees sessions to discuss leadership and values, Values induction, and workplace behaviour training. At the end of the reporting period, approximately 63 per cent of current secondees at ACFO and Commander level have participated in a workplace behaviour training session.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.4 is implemented and notes delivery of the “Embedding FRV Values” program continues beyond the Year Two to Five Plan.

As noted in the FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22, CFA and FRV values are broadly aligned. The operating context and organisational cultures of the two organisations are distinct. This can bring challenges, particularly for those secondees operating within both agencies.⁴⁷ FSIM recognises that FRV has taken dedicated action via workshops to provide secondees with clarity when working within both cultural and operational contexts. These workshops focused on organisational overview, processes for navigating FRV, practicalities of FRV Human Resources and systems, learning and development opportunities, child safety, and diversity and inclusion.

In the FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22, FSIM noted a significant risk to the values project – FRV had not prioritised complaints management (particularly collecting data and reporting). FSIM further noted that the lack of transparent employee experience data to inform FRV’s identification and management of issues posed considerable risks to FRV’s ability to implement defined values and programs that support leadership, relationships, and the way it operates.⁴⁸ FRV advised that it needed to develop performance indicators and analytics for complaints management to enable reporting on themes and trends. This work will be undertaken by a think tank comprising members from across the organisation established for this purpose as part of FRV’s culture planning in Year Three.⁴⁹

While the work of the think tank was in its early stages at the end of the reporting period, FSIM notes that FRV has recognised and is taking action to develop a streamlined and contemporary complaints management solution that meets the needs and expectations of employees, the community, and external bodies (e.g., WorkSafe, Gender Equality Commission) in its journey to a modern and progressive fire and rescue service. Given part of the objective of action 4.4 is to support leadership, relationships and the way it operates, an effectiveness assessment could not be undertaken until this program is complete and data is available.

⁴⁷Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 95.

⁴⁸Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 98.

⁴⁹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 105.

Action 4.5: Continue delivering the following cultural and diversity change programs: (a) CFA behavioural standards program; (b) CFA child safety compliance plan; (c) Inclusion and diversity strategy and supporting action plans; and (d) Fire Services Statement funded Initiatives.

Action objective: CFA promotes cultural inclusiveness and diversity through fit for purpose plans and programs.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2024	June 2024	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to deliver the following work programs:

- Roll out of Behavioural Standards (5 streams)
- Implement Child Safety Compliance Plan
- Implement Inclusion and Diversity Strategy
- Deliver Supporting Diversity in our Fire Services Project
- Deliver Investing in Leadership Development Project
- Deliver Investing in Volunteer Leadership Development Project
- Deliver the Mental Health for Leaders Project.

Progress summary

FSIM notes that CFA has expanded its focus from the year two ‘Right Environment Program’ (focused on reducing the number of open complaints) to a broader, more strategic approach to culture and diversity change programs. This broader program is informed by the findings of the *External Review of Culture and Issues Management (2022 Szoke Review)*. CFA anticipates this broader approach will help it to meet its diversity, culture, leadership development and health, safety and wellbeing goals. This comprehensive and strategic approach that looks beyond complaints management is encouraging.

The program is overseen by separate project governance groups, all of which report through the People, Culture and Remuneration Board Sub-Committee and CFA Executive.

A summary of progress against each deliverable is provided below, noting that the status provided is CFA’s assessment of progress reported through their internal governance processes.

1. Roll out of Behavioural Standards (5 streams)

The Behavioural Standards program builds on the ‘Right Environment Program’ highlighted in FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22.⁵⁰

CFA has delivered over 100 workshops with over 3,500 members now trained. The behavioural standards are embedded into the onboarding process for new volunteers. CFA coordinated sessions for groups of Brigades in local catchments to further optimise delivery and maximise attendance.

2. Implement Child Safety Compliance Plan

FSIM’s Annual Report 2021/22 noted an opportunity to improve collaboration through established groups like HoA to understand and resolve reform issues. FSIM noted there is an opportunity to enhance the clarity and transparency of communication to support effective collaboration between the two agencies on significant issues like the child safety requirements for secondees.⁵¹

CFA and FRV have different requirements relating to the application of child safety requirements (e.g., requirements for WWCC). CFA’s policy is that all staff and volunteers must have a valid WWCC while

⁵⁰Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 100.

⁵¹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 48.

the FRV Operational EA does not require FRV staff to have child safety checks. As highlighted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/2022, this is a serious matter which requires a timely resolution.⁵²

To address this gap, a CFA/FRV Child Safety Working Group was established in February 2023 to develop a program of work to review seconded roles and determine relevant WWCC and child safety training requirements. FRV identified 22 operational leadership seconded positions that require a WWCC and child safety training requirements, with additional specialist training for those involved in the management of child safety complaints. The proposed requirements were presented to the Working Group in June 2023, following a review by senior CFA personnel. Throughout this process, CFA consistently highlighted that its policy position for all staff and volunteers to have a valid WWCC remains unchanged.

At the end of the reporting period, all FRV secondees had not yet met CFA's child safety requirements.

3. Implement Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

CFA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2025 (D&I Strategy) was approved by CFA Board and launched in March 2023, supported by communications and implementation plans for ongoing oversight of implementation progress.⁵³ Additional detail relating to the development and implementation of CFA's D&I Strategy is at action 4.10.

4. Deliver the Mental Health for Leaders Project

A new item delivered under this action is the Mental Health for Leaders program to contribute to the CFA Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan. The content reflects the requirements of incoming Psychological Health regulations and the recommendations of the 2022 Szoke Review. The suite of learning materials were due to be completed by the end of June 2023.

5. Fire Services Statement funded initiatives

The Victorian government announced a \$60 million investment in the Victorian Fire Services, as part of the Fire Services Statement. This investment includes the three programs below, all of which are completed:

- Deliver Supporting Diversity in our Fire Services Project
- Deliver Investing in Leadership Development Project
- Deliver Investing in Volunteer Leadership Development Project

CFA are preparing closure reports on the Fire Services Statement funded initiatives alongside broader analysis (where relevant) to support the transition to BAU.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.5 is progressing. FSIM encourages the agencies to continue working together to ensure the safety of children and young people is a priority and mitigate risk of harm towards children and young people as far as possible. FSIM observed that CFA's progress against the new Child Safe Standards has been positive, with evidence received in June 2023 that the Commission's requirement for quarterly reporting will be removed. However, as highlighted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, issues working with children are a serious matter, and some FRV secondees did not have a valid WWCC at the end of the reporting period. While FSIM has observed progress, the project plan guiding the finalisation of the Child Safety Program (as presented to HoA in June 2023) indicates the transition to BAU in December 2024. As a result, aspects of CFA's child-safe requirements, particularly the requirement for all currently identified secondees to have a valid WWCC, will remain unmet.

FSIM notes that many FRV secondees have self-elected to obtain a WWCC, and CFA continues to encourage this initiative.

⁵²Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 49.

⁵³Country Fire Authority, 2023, *CFA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*, Country Fire Authority, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-value/diversity-and-inclusion>>

Action 4.6: Develop and continue delivering on inclusion and diversity initiatives: (a) Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan; (b) Gender Equity Action Plan; and (c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

Action objective: FRV promote inclusion and diversity through fit for purpose strategies, plans and initiatives.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	March 2023	In progress – significant delays

Context

This action requires FRV to develop and deliver the following:

1. Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

Progress summary

In the reporting period, the FRV Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy FY 2023 – 2032 (DEI Strategy) was developed and aligned to the FRV Strategic Plan. ELT endorsed the DEI Strategy in March 2023 and was currently in consultation with the United Firefighters Union. Following endorsement from the UFU, FRV will distribute the draft DEI Strategy to employees for their feedback prior to the finalisation and launch of the document.

FRV's Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 (GEAP) was completed and submitted to the Gender Equality Commission in August 2022, and implementation of the plan had commenced.

Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan December 2022 – June 2024 (RRAP) was completed, formally endorsed by the CEO of Reconciliation Australia and launched in November 2022.⁵⁴ FRV's RRAP lays the foundations for future action plans and reconciliation initiatives in areas such as "Relationships", "Respect", "Opportunities" and "Governance and implementation of the plan has commenced.

The DEI Strategy, GEAP and RRAP provide FRV with a long-term plan for the delivery of actions. The transition of these actions to BAU via established and integrated delivery across the organisation has commenced. FRV's key external stakeholders in developing the DEI Strategy, the GEAP and the RRAP include the Gender Equality Commission, Reconciliation Australia, and the UFU.

Governance of this large-scale work program across diversity, equity and inclusion (the DEI Strategy and the GEAP) is part of regular quarterly reporting to the ELT. Delivery of the work has shifted from a project-style team to an integrated delivery across the organisation. Executive leaders in FRV have accountability to sustain via their performance and development plans, ensuring the focus and sustainability of the actions.

A short overview of the delivery and implementation of the various deliverables is outlined below.

1. FRV Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy

ELT endorsed FRV's draft DEI Strategy in March 2023. Progression of the draft DEI Strategy was placed on hold to prioritise developing and launching FRV's GEAP to ensure compliance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

FRV intends to align and streamline current diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives with the DEI Strategy, ensuring collaboration for delivery between the Women's' Support Coordinators, Multicultural Liaison Officers and other key stakeholders.

FRV identified six diversity groups for inclusion in the draft DEI Strategy:

⁵⁴Fire Rescue Victoria, 2022, *FRV Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024*, Fire Rescue Victoria, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.frv.vic.gov.au/frv-policies>>

- Women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- CALD people
- people with disability
- LGBTIQ+ people
- children and youth and mature-aged people.

FRV advised the development of project and action plans for the implementation of actions under the draft DEI Strategy will commence following final endorsement from the UFU and subsequent ELT endorsement.

FSIM understands that FRV's Diversity and Inclusion team established a regular meeting with CFA's Diversity and Inclusion team with the intent to work on improving diversity, equity and inclusion across the fire services in Victoria. This intent includes alignment with FRV's broader culture work. Outputs from this cross-agency collaborative approach are not yet available, however FSIM supports the development of the relationship between these teams to align (where appropriate) diversity and inclusion activities and support secondees who work between the two organisations.

2. Gender Equity Action Plan

FRV has three aims for the GEAP⁵⁵, which provides a roadmap of activity under three of the four pillars in the DEI Framework: leadership, culture and people.

- build a strong foundational understanding of equality, equity and inclusion that enables the creation of a psychologically safe, inclusive and respectful workplace
- identify barriers to systems and processes to enable equitable access to leave requirements, development opportunities, recruitment and promotion and a reduction in the gender pay gap
- break down unhelpful gender stereotypes that prevent FRV from being a contemporary fire service that is reflective of, and responsive to, the community it serves.

To support activities aligned to obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020 Act*, FRV's Diversity and Inclusion Team has established a Gender Equality Action Plan Implementation Group, which consists of directorate representatives with actions allocated to them under the GEAP.

3. Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

FRV has a long-term plan to develop and deliver reconciliation activities across the organisation, focusing first on "reflection".⁵⁶ FRV is at the start of this journey with an 18-month action plan guiding the first delivery steps.

FRV's inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RRAP)⁵⁷ outlines actions, deliverables, timelines, and leads, to ensure transparency and accountability to continue to advocate for strategies to support equity and equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.

FRV's ELT is ultimately responsible for the RRAP's implementation over the next 18 months. FRV's Diversity and Inclusion Lead and those identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples led the work to develop the RRAP. Establishing a RAP Working Group, which will lead subsequent RAPs, is an action item for this RRAP.

Follow-up on FSIM-identified risks in FY 2021-22


A significant risk observed by FSIM and reported in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22 was that comprehensive employee experience data had not informed FRV's Diversity and Inclusion Framework as MFB did not historically keep this data.⁵⁸ FSIM observes that FRV is addressing this risk through the

⁵⁵Fire Rescue Victoria, 2022, FRV Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025, Fire Rescue Victoria, 15 August 2023, <<https://www.frv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/FRV%20Gender%20Equality%20Action%20Plan%202022-2025.pdf>>

⁵⁶There are four types of RAP (Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate), which allows RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen their reconciliation commitment.

⁵⁷Fire Rescue Victoria, 2022, *FRV Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024*, Fire Rescue Victoria, viewed 15 August 2023, <<https://www.frv.vic.gov.au/frv-policies>>, pg. 10-13.

⁵⁸Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 104.



draft DEI Strategy and associated activities. The draft DEI Strategy includes the capture of the following measures, which can be used to inform and refine activities:

- numbers of employees undertaking Workplace Behaviour compliance training increase and complaints decrease over time
- FRV's workforce demographics gradually become more representative of the community
- an 'all-inclusive support network' is established and becomes trusted as the key engagement mechanism for DEI at FRV
- quarterly reporting of deidentified employee diversity data and other human resources metrics demonstrate a positive shift in workforce demographics
- annual reporting of improvement in intersectional inclusion data broken down by each priority diversity group and compared with overall survey data
- DEI needs of employees and Directorates are supported promptly and effectively.

In addition, and in line with requirements in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, FRV undertook a baseline workplace gender audit for the first year of reform (1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021) to establish a baseline of workplace gender equality from which to build, measured against 7 indicators outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.⁵⁹

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.6 is progressing, noting that FRV has significantly progressed these core foundational activities to promote inclusion and diversity activities across the organisation.

⁵⁹*Gender Equality Act 2020*, S3 (definitions, pg. 4)

Action 4.7: Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models.

Action objective: CFA's brigade leadership structure is fit for purpose, reflecting modernised brigade and group models with identified pathways for volunteer progression.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	February 2025	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires CFA to develop a scope for CFA's leadership roles (particularly operational leadership) to reflect contemporary brigade and group models.

This action has been amended to account for phased activity under the CFA Operating Model Program (action 1.7).

FSIM understands that while this action remains in the Year Two to Five Plan, delivery will fall under action 1.7. The work program under action 1.7 will provide a logical sequence of activities to resolve broader questions on CFA's operating model, which are required to inform the delivery of this action.

Progress summary

This initiative is part of a wider program to support CFA becoming a contemporary organisation. The Operating Model Program (action 1.7) is a six-year program developed following extensive organisation-wide consultation and will be progressively implemented. Each year, the executive and Board agree on which initiatives will progress, taking account of the operating context at the time and other relevant factors, such as available resources.

This particular action relating to leadership roles is planned to be complete by February 2025. The precise scope is still to be confirmed but will likely include the roles from volunteer fire fighter through to CO, CFA.

CFA advised that the new timeframe proposed for completion of this action considers the Operating Model Program and the associated dependencies, with a new completion date of February 2025. Activity under this action was initiated in April 2023, and work is in its early stages.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.7 is progressing. FSIM notes that CFA has drafted possible performance measures for activities relevant to this action and that once CFA executive has agreed on a final approach, FSIM will seek a detailed implementation plan to meaningfully consider when the impact of this action could be assessed.

FSIM notes that CFA does not intend this activity will put additional requirements on staff seconded to CFA from FRV. CFA's intention is that seconded staff are expected to promote and facilitate CFA members to attend leadership capability opportunities and programs as part of their roles as Commanders and ACFO's in CFA areas.

Given that activity to complete this action falls under CFA's Operating Model review (action 1.7), FSIM considers that it may be useful to consider these actions as part of a broader review of remaining Year Two to Five Plan actions, as recommended in Section 3 of this report.

Action 4.8: Identify new opportunities to recognise and value the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters to delivering fire services (e.g., communications and collaboration).

Action objective: CFA and FRV identify and improve the mechanisms and processes that acknowledge and value their firefighters.

Lead agency: CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	June 2023	Completed

Context

The action requires both agencies to deliver complementary activities to acquit the action objective. CFA is focused on addressing the identified gap following reform implementation to recognise secondees and their service via nominations for national awards, including the Australian Fire Services Medal and National Emergency Medal. CFA also focused on ensuring FRV secondees can be recognised for their service and contribution to CFA via CFA service awards.

FRV focused on establishing an honours and awards process which includes an Honours and Awards Committee, an Australia Fire Services Medal Committee, developing a draft Honours and Awards Manual, a suite of FRV internal medals and certificates, and recognition of FRV fallen firefighters at both State and National Memorial sites.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported this action as completed and acquitted in April 2023.

1. CFA implementation

As a result of Fire Services Reform, seconded operational employees became ineligible for nomination or receipt of CFA Honours and Awards, including service awards, due to definitions for eligibility identified in the CFA Honours and Awards Manual.

CFA worked collaboratively with FRV to support nominations for national awards and has enabled FRV secondees to have their service with CFA recognised through the CFA Service Award. Through the Awards and Recognition Officer, CFA is working with FRV to support the development of processes to identify and deliver recognition opportunities. These include providing prior service forms for personnel to assist FRV to establish eligibility for FRV staff for national medals.

CFA and FRV have also agreed that FRV staff seconded to CFA, upon request, can receive their National Emergency Medal through a CFA presentation. In those instances, CFA invited FRV to attend.

Three award presentation ceremonies presenting both internal and external awards occurred between April and June 2023.

CFA Executive and the Board approved amendments to the CFA Honours and Awards Manual to ensure that the secondee's service to CFA can be formally recognised by CFA. These changes were communicated to seconded staff and CFA members in February 2023.

2. FRV implementation

As a new organisation, FRV created a new recognition program unique to FRV, which "demonstrates the professionalism of all FRV employees and... promote[s] harmonisation and a positive organisational image".⁶⁰

To deliver against this scope, FRV developed and delivered an honours and awards program, which includes:

- an Honours and Awards Committee to provide governance oversight of the Honour and Awards programs and represent a cross-section of FRV operational personnel
- an Australia Fire Services Medal Committee

⁶⁰Draft FRV Honours and Awards Manual, pg. 2

- the draft Honours and Awards Manual
- a suite of FRV internal medals and certificates and
- recognition of FRV fallen firefighters at both State and National Memorial sites.

To acquit this action, FRV is also developing a new recognition program to include informal recognition as part of its delivery. Examples provided by FRV of these more informal recognition activities include:

- FRV officers attend morning tea or similar at stations after significant events to acknowledge service delivery.
- Weekly recognition of FRV employees for various contributions highlighted in the weekly online FRV News communication.

FRV also note a link to their 'Values in Action' program (additional detail at action 4.4), recognising opportunities to develop awards based on recognising an individual or team's input into FRV values. FRV has developed a range of resources to enable leaders and employees to recognise their team members. These resources include meeting templates, "Values Shoutouts" proformas, a dedicated honours and awards intranet page, regular communications from the Fire Rescue Commissioner via email and newsletter articles on awards and recognition.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.8 is implemented.

FSIM observes that CFA focused on establishing awards and recognition for seconded staff, and that formal recognition for volunteers, staff and secondees (e.g., Spirit of CFA award and the CFA Service Award) and informal recognition (e.g., via the monthly CFA Volunteer Forum) play important roles in valuing the contributions made by CFA members. FSIM observes that at the end of the reporting period, CFA was actively promoting award schemes to volunteers and was undertaking work to identify, understand, and address barriers to women nominating or being nominated for awards.

FSIM observes that integrating informal recognition as part of FRV's everyday culture will assist FRV in successfully integrating their values (e.g., valuing teamwork, being accountable, and showing respect).

FSIM also observes that FRV has taken steps to ensure secondees receive notifications via a dedicated email group. This email group makes sure seconded employees receive the same information as their FRV counterparts, at the same time. This is a positive step in assisting seconded employees to navigate between the two agencies, a risk identified in the FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22.⁶¹

As this action was completed in the reporting period, FSIM has not yet completed an effectiveness assessment of this action against its objective.

⁶¹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 96-97.

Action 4.9: Demonstrate progress towards reaching the government’s commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV.

Action objective: FRV values a diverse and inclusive workforce, reflecting the community they serve.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
December 2025	December 2025	In progress - minor delays

Context

This action requires FRV to progress towards 400 women career firefighters. However, FRV has taken a broader view of the action’s implementation and is focussing on creating a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace to support the attraction and retention of women firefighters through the implementation of the GEAP and activities to identify, understand and address barriers in current FRV recruitment and employment practices. These activities include:

- progress towards 400 women career firefighters
- developing and implementing the GEAP
- targeted recruitment (developing campaigns and engagement to raise awareness of career firefighting among under-represented groups, including women)
- development and implementation of policies and initiatives to support and respect the needs of women firefighters across all stages of their employee lifecycle
- supporting women firefighters to grow, develop their skills and progress their careers.

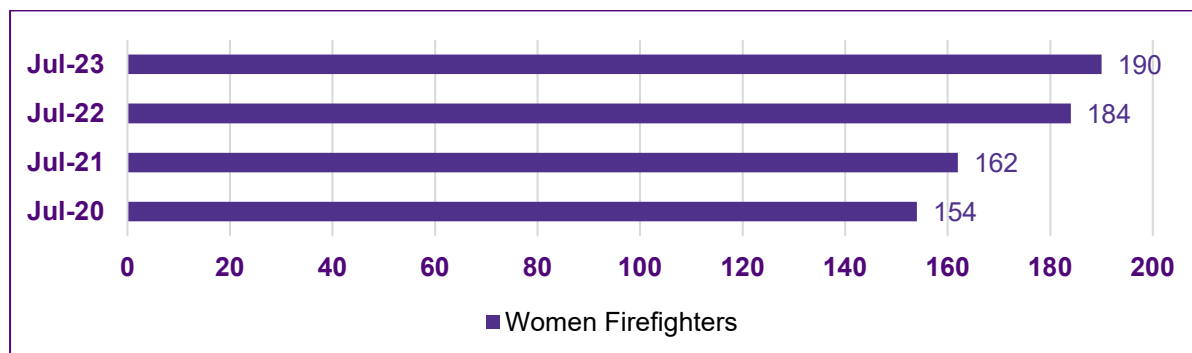
By delivering these activities, FRV intends to demonstrate progress towards the aspirational target.

Progress summary

1. Progress towards 400 women career firefighters

Figure 4 outlines the current women career firefighters, as at 30 June 2023. This data shows a slight increase in women career firefighters since the inception of the FSR.

Figure 4: Total women firefighters in FRV – 1 July 2020 to 1 July 2023⁶²



Since the inception of the Fire Services Reform (and establishment of FRV), FRV has increased the number of women in Leading fire fighter, Level 1 and Level 2 firefighter roles, with slight reductions in women in Station Officer, Qualified firefighter and Level 3 firefighter roles. A detailed comparison between 2020 and 2023 is provided in Table 17.

⁶²FSIM FY 2022-23 information request. The definition of “Firefighter” includes the following roles: recruit, firefighter, firefighter level 1-3, qualified FF, leading Firefighter, Station Officer, Senior Station Officer, Commander, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Instructor - including those seconded to CFA, Deputy Commissioner and Fire Rescue Commissioner.

Table 17: Women in firefighting roles – comparative summary 2020-2023

Rank	1 July 2020	1 July 2021	1 July 2022	1 July 2023
Deputy Commissioner	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	1	1	1	1
Commander	5	5	5	5
Instructor	2	2	2	2
Senior Station Officer	8	8	8	8
Station Officer	12	11	11	11
Leading firefighter	63	63	63	77
Qualified firefighter	50	50	50	46
Firefighter Level 3	12	12	12	8
Firefighter Level 2	0	8	24	23
Firefighter Level 1	0	1	7	8
Total	154	162	184	190

2. Developing and implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025

FRV's GEAP was completed and submitted to the Gender Equality Commission in August 2022 and implementation of the plan has commenced. The GEAP includes actions to increase gender representation across all levels of the organisation and is a key aspect of delivery against the Year Two to Five Plan Action 4.6.

3. Targeted recruitment -- developing campaigns and engagement to raise awareness of career firefighting among under-represented groups, including women

FRV has established a Women's Support Coordinator Network (Network). The Network aims to improve the attraction and retention of women firefighters by identifying opportunities, understanding and addressing barriers and reviewing policies and procedures.⁶³

The women in senior leadership roles at FRV and lead this Network are considering activities that will deliver against the following defined outcomes:

- increase women applicants
- increased pass rates of women recruits⁶⁴
- develop tailored pregnancy support for women firefighters
- retain 100 per cent of women firefighters who take pregnancy leave
- overall increase in the number of women firefighters and retention at all ranks from Deputy Commissioner to Recruit
- increased collaboration across FRV and skill exchange during alternative duty placements
- increase support and career satisfaction of all female firefighters
- receive positive feedback from women firefighters at all levels of leadership.

Given the early stages of the Network's inception, comprehensive data against these outcomes is not yet available. FSIM encourages FRV to collect and analyse this data and drivers, as it will inform continuous improvement across FRV's various attraction, retention and promotion programs. Collection of diversity and inclusion data will also help address the data risk highlighted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, noting that collection of this data will need to be prioritised in order to measure the success of diversity and inclusion activities.⁶⁵

⁶³FSIM FY 2022-23 information request

⁶⁴FSIM notes that in 2022-23, FRV provided "one on one" assistance to 70 per cent of all women applicants through the Women's Support Coordinator program

⁶⁵Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 108.

Outside of the Network, FRV has also initiated a number of projects to support the connection of women, both within the firefighting service and with external groups who provide a pathway to highlight firefighting as a career choice for women. Initial activities include:

- building relationships with women-focused organisations such as the Australian Institute of Sport and Girl Guides Victoria
- attending 14 career days at schools with a diversity of staff (i.e., women, men and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds)
- delivering Women's Support Information Sessions to increase visibility of women firefighters at all recruitment touchpoints
- developing physical development programs (i.e., running and strength-training programs) targeted at women firefighters.

4. Development and implementation of policies and initiatives tailored to women firefighters

FRV's intended focus in this space is to support and respect the needs of women firefighters across all stages of their employee lifecycle. Initiated programs include:

- implementation of Sanitary Items Policy and personal hygiene bags at all stations
- development of a draft pregnancy policy (including additional support for miscarriage) to provide clarity for both firefighters and managers to ensure a consistent experience regardless of location
- development of a draft menopause policy and breastfeeding policy (in draft).
- establishment of women firefighter forums
- development of women specific health services and monitoring via the FRV Health Model
- updated maternity wear range to include various options and styles.

As noted in the targeted recruitment activities above, data against these programs (e.g., uptake and impact) are not yet available, however FSIM encourages FRV to collect and analyse program data to inform a continuous improvement approach.

5. Promotion: Supporting women firefighters to grow and develop their skills and progress their careers

In the reporting period, FRV developed a formalised process for assigning alternative duties to firefighters during pregnancy or other pregnancy-related circumstances. This process includes providing remote tasking at specialty departments centrally located to promote accessibility to regionally based women and developing "return to work" pathways for women firefighters who have taken parental leave to return to operational roles.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.9 is progressing. Based on the most recent data for women career firefighters and as noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, given FRV's current recruitment approaches and turnover levels, FSIM finds that reaching 400 women firefighters by 2025 continues to be unachievable.⁶⁶ However, FSIM recognises that FRV has taken considerable steps in Year Three of the reform to initiate and develop evidence-based workforce planning and is building systems and processes to capture data for better decision-making (e.g. GEAP implementation and the program of work under the Network, targeted recruitment activities and review, amendment and implementation of relevant policies). Prioritising data collection and analysis of these initiatives will be needed to inform FRV's continuous improvement approach and to enable FRV to make a step-change towards the aspirational target of 400 women career firefighters.

⁶⁶Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 109.

Action 4.10: Support diversity and inclusion in CFA and make progress towards delivering on the commitment to increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent.

Action objective: CFA values a diverse and inclusive workforce, reflecting the community they serve.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2025	June 2025	Completed

Context

This action requires CFA to meet its commitment to increase the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent in Year Two of the reform. CFA's continued focus is on increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles and this remains a measure in the CFA Strategy and Outcomes Framework.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. CFA met its commitment to increase the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent in Year Two of the reform.⁶⁷

CFA's work to strengthen diversity and inclusion continues and is broader than this one measure. The D&I Strategy, endorsed by CFA Executive and Board and launched in March 2023, is publicly available on CFA's website.⁶⁸ CFA developed a draft diversity and inclusion module to support the D&I Strategy implementation and a plain English version of the D&I Strategy is being finalised.

Findings

FSIM finds action 4.10 is implemented, acknowledging that CFA is embedding diversity and inclusion to drive positive change that reflects their organisational values and behaviours. This activity is long-term and complex and extends beyond the life of the Year Two to Five Plan.

FSIM observes from CFA's quarterly outcomes progress reporting that the number of women in brigade leadership roles continues to increase, with 17.5 per cent of volunteer leadership roles filled by women in Q4 FY 2022-23.

In FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, FSIM highlighted that agencies had opportunities to build more comprehensive data and measures to deliver outcomes for diverse groups.⁶⁹ FSIM notes that goals one and five have a particular focus on diversity and inclusion data to improve understanding of membership and uncover potential barriers and notes that the focus on data improvements in the D&I Strategy helps to address findings in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22.

FSIM notes that CFA undertook significant consultation with members in developing the D&I Strategy and developed a communications plan to guide consistent messaging on implementation progress and actions. These activities to embed diversity and inclusion as part of everyday business align with CFA's activity to develop an Engagement Framework (action 1.1).

As the action was completed in the reporting period, FSIM has not yet undertaken an assessment of effectiveness against the action objective.

⁶⁷Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 107-108.

⁶⁸Country Fire Authority, 2023, *Diversity and Inclusion CFA Strategy 2023-2025*, Country Fire Authority, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion>>

⁶⁹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 107.

6.5 Priority five actions

Context

Priority Five of the Year Two to Five Plan contains eight actions that have the shared outcome of “Ensure the future sustainability of the fire services”. The following section provides a progress summary for each Priority Five action.

Progress of actions

Action 5.1: CFA in consultation with FRV develops and maintain a secondment strategy that details CFA’s capability and capacity needs for those resources sourced from FRV.

Action objective: The capability and capacity needs of CFA are clearly understood by FRV and the FRB. FRV’s strategic workforce planning enables the provision of secondees that meet the operational needs and capability requirements of CFA.

Lead agency: CFA

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	June 2023	In progress – significant delays

Context

This action requires CFA to develop a capability statement (CFA Capability Statement) that clearly defines CFA’s operational capability and capacity requirements that meet its legislative obligations and the standards established for staff seconded to CFA from FRV under the Secondment Agreement.

The CFA Capability Statement applies to roles resourced through the secondment model, including ACFOs (Regional Commanders), ACFOs (Manager Community Safety), Commanders, Instructors, PAD Supervisors and PAD Operators. The CFA Capability Statement comprises the required technical, professional skills, CFA competencies and skills (including skills to support volunteers), leadership, management and personal attributes for staff seconded from FRV, including:

- capacity required including specifications relating to seconded position type, number of positions and locations for each classification and relief requirements
- required technical skills statements relating to seconded roles and associated functions
- professional skills statements outlining role requirements
- specifications on what success looks like, particularly with relation to senior leadership roles and responsibilities, key working relationships, and experience and qualifications required (e.g., CFA child safety standards and behavioural standards).

CFA advised they intend to conduct an annual review of the CFA Capability Statement to ensure its capability and capacity requirements are fit for purpose.

CFA’s capability and capacity needs for staff seconded from FRV are important inputs for consideration by the FRB. Once established, the FRB will set professional capabilities and standards to satisfy the requirements of a position under the secondment arrangements (action 4.2).

FSIM notes that there are several interdependencies with this action:

- action 1.7: Review of CFA Operating Model
- action 4.2: FRB capability standards to support the secondment arrangements
- action 5.2: Review of fire services sector operational capability and capacity requirements
- action 5.4: FRV Strategic Workforce Plan with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services
- action 5.8: Long-term funding plan for CFA and FRV.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, CFA reported significant delays in completing this action. CFA planned to submit a change request to the Minister to extend the due date for this action in FY2023-24.

The CFA Capability Statement requirements are based on the current capabilities and capacity required to operate and deliver services under the new fire services model. FRV, under the Secondment Agreement, must meet CFA's capability and capacity needs via seconded staff. FSIM notes that if CFA's required capabilities are different from the current FRV Operational EA, it is the responsibility of FRV to advocate on behalf of CFA.

In July 2022, CFA completed the CFA Capability Statement and provided it to DJCS and FRV for feedback. In August 2022, CFA provided FRV with an additional annexure including CFA's behavioural standards and child safety requirements. CFA considers it is imperative the behavioural standards and child safety requirements are part of the overarching CFA Capability Statement to ensure all FRV seconded staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to keep children and young people safe.

CFA had established success profiles for ACFOs and Commanders as at 30 June 2023 and planned to develop the success profiles for Instructors and ACFOs (Manager Community Safety) in FY2023-24.

FRV reported that it had raised informal questions with CFA to further clarify CFA's capability requirements since July 2022. FSIM notes numerous discussions between CFA and FRV on the CFA Capability Statement at HoA meetings over the reporting period. This includes a request from FRV in September 2022 seeking further clarification on CFA's capability and capacity requirements. CFA responded to FRV in early February 2023, which was delayed because of the higher priority placed by CFA on operational response efforts during the flood crisis in October 2022.

In June 2023, FRV had yet to provide a formal response to CFA on the CFA Capability Statement and had yet to commence an evaluation of the provision of FRV secondees against the CFA Capability Statement. FRV's evaluation of CFA's capability and capacity requirements will be deferred until the CFA Capability Statement is finalised.

FSIM notes that the draft FRV Workforce Plan does not currently incorporate the capabilities and capacities required by CFA for staff seconded from FRV and notes that there is an initiative in this draft plan to deliver CFA's capabilities and capacity requirements in 2024. This issue is raised in action 5.4.

Findings

FSIM recognises several intersections across the obligations under the FRV Operational EA, Secondment Agreement and the FRV and CFA Acts. These obligations are wider and broader than specific reform activities in the Year Two to Five Plan and many of these intersections are impacting progress and agencies' ability to implement CFA's capability and capacity requirements. These interactions of obligations are included in the risks outlined below.

FSIM finds action 5.1 is progressing. Given the risks associated with the successful implementation of the Secondment Agreement and the imperative of ensuring that FRV's seconded staff possess the necessary competencies and skillsets required by CFA, it remains crucial for both agencies to establish a shared understanding of CFA's requirements. This shared understanding enables FRV to consider these needs when assigning staff to seconded roles and its broader workforce planning.

1. CFA has limited ability to require and assess whether staff seconded from FRV meet its capability needs

CFA is unable to verify that seconded staff possess CFA-specific competencies as it has no access to FRV personnel data (e.g., skillset, detailed qualifications, performance, applied experience and training) and there is currently no agreed mechanism for sharing this information in an appropriate way that takes into account privacy and other considerations.

While FSIM notes that details relating to seconded staff competencies are not currently shared, FRV advised FSIM that FRV and CFA Commander candidate competencies and qualifications are identical with the exception of two specific CFA-required competencies ('Wildfire level 3' and 'Plan a Prescribed Burn'). FSIM understands that all FRV seconded Commanders undertake these two extra modules prior to working for CFA and that CFA personnel deliver these two modules for FRV seconded staff. At the end of the reporting period, FSIM had yet to validate this information to confirm that the competencies

and qualifications were identical, however this may be a focus of this action's assessment in future reporting.

As noted in action 5.4, FSIM finds that FRV completing its gap analysis of secondees' skillsets against the CFA Capability Statement requirements and sharing this information with CFA would support both FRV and CFA to target and tailor capability development programs. This would ensure that secondees possess the necessary capability to deliver services in the CAoV and support FRV to meet its secondment obligations to CFA. FSIM understands FRV plans to work with CFA to understand and forecast CFA's capability and capacity needs to inform the secondment arrangements in FY 2023/24.

2. Child Safety requirements

CFA and FRV have different policies relating to the application of child safety requirements. CFA's policy is that all staff and volunteers must have a valid WWCC, while the FRV Operational EA does not require staff to have child safety checks.

Progress on this issue is outlined in action 4.5, however in the context of this action, FRV had identified 22 operational leadership seconded positions that require a WWCC and child safety training requirements, with additional specialist training for those involved in the management of child safety complaints. The proposed requirements for these identified roles are subject to consultation and formal endorsement by CFA.

FSIM notes this key aspect of CFA capability requirements and at the end of the reporting period, work was underway to progress to create a pathway for FRV secondees to meet CFA's requirements.

3. Ability of FRV to meet CFA seconded workforce needs

FRV cannot currently provide the required number of seconded staff under the secondment arrangements which impacts CFA's service delivery and support for volunteers. FSIM notes that this is a legacy issue. Prior to reform, CFA faced challenges filling certain regional positions but had the ability to utilise CFA's personnel to address these challenges. Following reforms, CFA lost the ability to utilise their personnel to address vacancies and must rely on FRV under the secondment arrangements. Although FRV continues to face challenges in recruiting and retaining staff for various vacant seconded positions, it has actively collaborated with CFA to implement strategies aimed at increasing interest in these roles.

While this is a positive step, FSIM finds that changes to position descriptions, based on the requirements outlined in the CFA Capability Statement for positions seconded to CFA, will need agreement from the Consultative Committee if these changes are different to those outlined in the FRV Operational EA, and may cause further delays.

3.1. Vacant positions and relief management

CFA continued to report weekly to HoA and directly to FRV on operational seconded staff vacancies and non-relief as major operational and capacity issues since 1 July 2020. At the end of the reporting period, CFA and FRV reported there remained 12 vacant positions⁷⁰, comprising four ACFO, four Commander and four FRV Commander Reliever Positions. Across the reporting period, FRV has experienced difficulties identifying suitable seconded staff to fill these vacancies and provide relief. Under clause 4.6 of the Secondment Agreement, FRV is obligated to run a fair and equitable selection process for all seconded positions. This process, conducted internally by FRV (due to the FRV Operational EA, the CO, CFA does not have a role in selecting candidates), is time-consuming and does not always result in a suitable candidate being identified, with some vacancies advertised numerous times and a lack of applicants for expression of interests.

CFA has raised concerns via HoA that, in the longer term, it is difficult to determine the pathway that will ensure FRV has capable and available staff to fill the required seconded positions on an ongoing basis. FSIM finds that completing a secondment workforce gap analysis by FRV may help address these concerns.

FSIM recognises that FRV remains committed to ensuring that CFA seconded positions are occupied, including during periods of leave. This commitment extends to backfilling through higher duties when

⁷⁰"Vacancy" refers to the situation where a substantive Commander or ACFO position (as defined under the Secondment Agreement) does not have an FRV seconded staff member formally appointed to that role.

vacancies arise. FRV reported that it is currently providing relief into CFA secondment positions from FRV's Commander Reliever Pool ahead of providing relief to FRV positions for leave between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, taking into account there were 30 vacant Commander positions within FRV as at 30 June 2023.

In response to these challenges, FRV and CFA worked together to develop and deliver two Catchment Commander courses in FY2022-23, with each course accommodating 24 personnel. This initiative aimed at broadening the pool of staff who could be considered for secondment positions within CFA. As at 30 June 2023, 37 of 46 FRV staff attended these two courses and were seconded to CFA (six Lateral Entry Commanders, six Commanders have been promoted into CFA roles, 25 Commanders have undertaken periods of higher duties). FSIM understands that FRV plans to continue these efforts by delivering Catchment Commander programs annually.

FSIM observes that the ongoing ACFO and Commander vacancy and relief issues are discussed weekly at HoA.

3.2. Ensuring seconded staff have the capabilities and attributes as defined by the CFA Capability Statement

CFA notes that the capabilities and attributes of an ACFO in CFA differ from an ACFO in FRV; generally, FRV operational staff have less exposure to bushfire or prescribed fire in rural environments due to their work largely being based in Melbourne and peri-urban areas and are not responsible for the management of a volunteer workforce. CFA has defined the skills and attributes it needs to enable FRV to plan for and train its seconded workforce appropriately. FRV notes that some of these capabilities will require time to develop and that there is an initiative in the draft FRV's Workforce Plan (action 5.4) to ensure there is a pipeline of capable ACFOs and Commanders to support CFA's capability and capacity requirements, including ensuring staff with the requisite skills and capabilities required by CFA for delivering services at the CAoV.

Vacancy rates and availability of suitable staff are impacted by the number of staff reaching retirement age in the coming five to ten years. At the end of the reporting period, CFA had completed a demographics analysis of (substantive) seconded staff, noting that approximately 48 per cent of current seconded staff (in FY 2022-23, age 60+: 24 per cent, age 55-59: 24 per cent) could potentially retire over the next five to ten years. At the end of the reporting period, FRV had yet to validate the age demographic data provided by CFA. However, FSIM considers this has the potential to result in a significant loss of capability, skills and knowledge of appropriately qualified and experienced operational staff, particularly with wildfire firefighting skills and experience in working with volunteers over a short period of time. As FRV has not yet incorporated CFA's capabilities into its workforce planning, it is unclear how FRV will mitigate this risk.


4. Responsibility for managing performance of FRV staff seconded to CFA

Clauses within the FRV Operational EA (Schedule 18(1.1.1))⁷¹ and provisions in the Secondment Agreement (Clause 8 Ending a secondment)⁷² indicate that the CO, CFA cannot directly manage the performance of staff seconded from FRV to CFA, even though the CO, CFA has the order and control of the work of all secondees under Clause 7(a) of the Secondment Agreement. Under s25C(6) of the FRV Act, the CO, CFA is empowered to terminate a secondment arrangement for a FRV seconded staff if an equitable, fair and transparent process has been undertaken to review the conduct of the staff and is satisfied that such termination is appropriate. CFA reported that complications in applying these provisions arise due to the question of which legal instrument takes precedence.

CFA and FRV both recognise that there is a need for a practical approach for CFA to manage staff seconded from FRV in meeting its operational needs and capability requirements, while ensuring that processes and obligations outlined in the FRV Operational EA are followed. FSIM notes that CFA and FRV continue to work through appropriate protocols for managing the performance and misconduct of staff seconded to CFA from FRV via a supplementary instrument to the Secondment Agreement.

⁷¹Schedule 18 – Division B conduct resolution of the Division B Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement, Clause 1.1.1 states that FRV, the employer, will clearly express proper reason(s) for raising a concern(s) regarding an employee's performance and/or conduct (including its effect on the safety and welfare of other employees or the community).

⁷²The Secondment Agreement is silent on performance standards and only includes provisions pertaining to a fair and equitable process should the conduct of a seconded staff be in question, however, solely relates to the suspension and termination of a secondment.



However, as with vacancy, relief, and leave management, there are delays in finalising this supplementary instrument due to fundamental tensions between the Secondment Agreement, the FRV Operational EA and the needs of CFA, outlined in detail at action 3.9. CFA and FRV were addressing how staff performance management can be strengthened but were yet to present details to HoA.

FSIM has observed that CFA has raised issues regarding the CFA Capability Statement on the weekly HoA agenda for the FY2022-23 reporting period (12 months). FSIM has observed some progress in risk management (e.g., developing a supplementary instrument to guide the establishment of additional secondment positions for both permanent and temporary arrangements). However, FRV's formal response to CFA's capability requirements was still pending as at 30 June 2023. FSIM notes that the draft FRV Workforce Plan includes an initiative to deliver CFA's capabilities and capacity requirements in 2024 (action 5.4).

5. Agencies need to work collaboratively to ensure this action meets its objectives

In June 2023, CFA raised concerns with FRV that the draft FRV Workforce Plan may not meet CFA's capability requirements for wildfire response and working with volunteers. FSIM received evidence demonstrating that FRV worked closely with CFA to develop its Catchment Commander program, providing qualified personnel with the necessary skills to respond to and manage bushfires effectively.

A potential gap in the draft FRV Workforce Plan may pose a significant risk not only to the successful implementation of this action, but action 5.4 and, more generally, the broader success in planning for and delivering the future sustainability of the fire services (action 5.2).

FSIM emphasises the importance of collaborative efforts between CFA and FRV to establish and communicate a clear strategy for meeting CFA's capability and capacity needs, now and in the future.

Finally, the CFA Capability Statement is a critical input for the FRB when establishing capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the FRB's Firefighters Register, application processes and transparent appeals processes. FRB's use of the CFA Capability Statement will foster confidence within CFA that FRV seconded staff registered with FRB's Firefighters Register will meet the specific competencies or skillsets for seconded staff outlined in the CFA Capability Statement.

Action 5.2: Undertake a review of operational capability and capacity requirements to meet the future needs of fire services across Victoria to inform future funding plans.

Action objective: Ensure that current and future changes to Victoria's fire risk profile and the expectations of our communities inform service delivery strategies and future capability needs while acting as a key input into the future funding requirements for the sector.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2023	November 2024	In progress – on track

Context

This action requires DJCS, working with CFA and FRV, to perform an evidence-based review of CFA's and FRV's capability and capacity requirements (the review). The scope of the review is to identify and document gaps between CFA's and FRV's current and future state capability and capacity requirements and identify what uplift may be required to meet future needs. DJCS intends that this evidence-based analysis may inform future strategic investment decisions by the government and to support the assessment of the long-term financial sustainability for CFA and FRV.

Progress summary

In FY 2022-23, the Minister approved DJCS's change request to extend the due date for this action to November 2024. The review of CFA's and FRV's capability and capacity requirements depends on the completion of a number of other actions in the Year Two to Five Plan over the next 12 to 18 months. This review includes an environmental scan to assess impacts on workforce capacity and capability in actions 5.1 and action 5.4. Furthermore, the CFA Operating Model (action 1.7) and the FRV accreditation approach (action 2.2) constitute relevant inputs to the review.

In the reporting period, DJCS established a Project Steering Committee comprising CFA, FRV and DJCS executives and established an agreed Terms of Reference. The Steering Committee oversees the scope, approach, and delivery of action 5.2.

Following recommendations from the FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22⁷³, DJCS undertook an analysis to identify the interdependencies between Year Two to Five Plan actions to inform the scope and timing of the review. FSIM notes the proposed timeframe for completing action 5.2 is ambitious.

DJCS established a draft scope, governance arrangements and project plan for the review and provided the draft to CFA and FRV in January 2023. The proposed review focused on an evidence-based understanding of CFA's and FRV's future operational capability and capacity requirements to inform future strategic investment decisions and CFA's and FRV's future funding plans (action 5.8). In May 2023, CFA and FRV, via the Project Steering Committee, provided feedback that the scope of the proposed review could be broadened. At the end of the reporting period, the Project Steering Committee finalised the project plan. CFA and FRV provided advice on foundational matters - interpretation of the action, objective, statement of success, delivery approach, timelines and next steps. The Steering Committee approved the project framework to support current and future assessment of capability and capacity requirements. FSIM note that DJCS, CFA and FRV continue to work together to develop consensus on the scope of the project, intended outcomes, project deliverables and outputs. DJCS notes that the final output of this review may be one of many inputs into actions 5.7 and 5.8 and is also an input into CFA's and FRV's strategic planning over the coming years.

FSIM encourages CFA, DJCS and FRV to continue to collaborate to generate a constructive, informative, evidence-based operational capability and capacity review that articulates the benefits that support the intent of the reform for a complementary and sustainable fire service in Victoria.

Finding

FISM finds action 5.2 is progressing.

⁷³Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, < <https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 114.

Action 5.3: Develop an FRV Strategy.

Action objective: The development of an FRV Strategy that resonates with stakeholders and the authorising environment.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	September 2022	Completed

Context

This action requires FRV to develop a plan that sets out the direction for FRV for the next ten years. FRV determined that the Strategy should provide the organisation's vision, strategic pillars and priorities and outline the strategic framework and roadmap to achieve its intended outcomes.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported this action was completed and acquitted in January 2023.

FRV publicly released the FRV Strategy in September 2022.⁷⁴

1. FRV Strategy Development

FRV established a project plan to guide the FRV Strategy development and established a Strategy Project Reference Group to provide governance oversight. FRV undertook a suite of activities to develop the FRV Strategy, including mapping FRV strategic intent to existing organisational outcomes and mapping actions in the FRV Strategy with outcomes in FRV's Outcomes Framework. FSIM supports this mapping activity to clarify what actions and activities contribute to FRV's desired strategic outcomes.

FRV also undertook horizon scanning activities (both internal and external) to create a case for change and, through a series of internal and external consultations, defined FRV's identity, role and value proposition, shaped the vision, strategic pillars and priorities and set out actions and created a roadmap to implement.

Staff and FRV's strategic partners played a significant role in developing the FRV Strategy guided by an engagement program. Engagement activities included dedicated workshops for staff (noting 16 per cent of workshop attendees were secondees) and forum conversations (such as "Conversations in the Mess") between senior leadership and staff to identify the strategic actions most important to staff.

In FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, FSIM noted anecdotal evidence that a lack of clarity about how agencies' values apply to secondees working between both CFA and FRV could lead to risks such as, but not limited to, inconsistencies in decision-making. FSIM also noted anecdotal evidence that FRV had not effectively consulted with CFA about how FRV's organisational values would impact FRV staff seconded to CFA.⁷⁵


In developing the FRV Strategy, FRV addressed the lack of clarity on how values applied across the organisation, engaging with various stakeholders, including the Strategic Advisory Committee and holding focus groups with industry partners from the community, industry and local government. FRV also convened specific sessions with secondees to test the usability of the FRV Strategy and discuss what role seconded staff play in its success. FRV further interviewed its service delivery partners and the UFU.⁷⁶

FRV utilised stakeholder engagement activities to inform the development of the FRV Strategy, provide feedback on the environmental scanning activities, review themes that emerged from internal

⁷⁴Fire Rescue Victoria, 2023, *Fire Rescue Victoria Strategic Plan 2022-2023*, Fire Rescue Victoria, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.frv.vic.gov.au/publications>>

⁷⁵Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, <<https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 97.

⁷⁶Key stakeholder interviews were undertaken with the following stakeholders: Ambulance Victoria, Cladding Safety Victoria, CFA, ESTA, Emergency Management Victoria, EPA, Forest Fire Management Victoria, FRV Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, IGEM, Life Saving Victoria, SES, Victoria Building Authority, Victorian Council of Social Services, Victorian Planning Authority, Victoria Police, and WorkSafe.



engagement, and ask critical questions about the scale of ambition and community value of the outcomes and actions. FRV involved staff to test the usability of the draft plan and consider what current projects support the strategic direction to test the resonance of the Strategy with each FRV directorate.

2. FRV Strategy release and implementation

After completing the draft FRV Strategy, FRV further tested it with staff, sector partners and community representatives through four separate workshops. Based on the feedback, FRV's ELT endorsed the release of the FRV Strategy.

Since its release, FRV has embedded the FRV Strategy into FY 2023-24 business planning processes to ensure initiatives undertaken by FRV contribute to strategic outcomes. FRV provided evidence that staff participated in directorate business plan workshops and were aligning their workplans with broader business plans. As of 30 June 2023, 102 districts and departments had completed FRV strategy and values in action workshops at the ACFO/Director and Commander/Manager levels.

Moving forward, FRV has included significant initiatives under the FRV Strategy in monthly ELT meetings. FRV's ELT is also considering how to incorporate these initiatives into current legislative reporting to maintain accountability for the following strategic outcomes:

- **Communities:** FRV is a modern fire and rescue service for Victorian communities
- **People:** FRV has a professional and safe workplace where everyone belongs
- **Partners:** FRV is a trusted partner that supports shared outcomes for a safer Victoria.

FSIM supports the planned reporting on progress against the FRV Strategy and considers it will provide increased transparency to the public on how FRV is progressing towards its strategic outcomes, given the FRV Strategy clearly defines what success looks like against each strategic pillar. This transparency of reporting will also assist FSIM in assessing the effectiveness of the FRV Strategy in future years.

Findings

FSIM finds action 5.3 is implemented and notes that the FRV Strategy is a ten-year plan with activities to improve its community focus and shift towards a modern, trusted, and inclusive fire and rescue service. These are long-term activities and extend beyond the Year Two to Five Plan.

As the action was completed in the implementation period, FSIM has not yet completed an assessment of effectiveness against the action objective.

Action 5.4: Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.

Action objective: FRV has a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations, that forecasts changing workforce requirements through to 2026. The plan will also outline the actions required to ensure FRV has the workforce capacity, capability and culture required to deliver on community expectations, including secondment obligations to CFA.

Lead agency: FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
June 2022	March 2023	Completed

Context

This action requires FRV to develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.

The FRV Strategic Workforce Plan (Operations) 2022-2027 (FRV Workforce Plan) will address existing workforce challenges and opportunities to support the optimal wellbeing, capacity and capability of FRV's operational workforce, which is integral to its performance as a service-led organisation.

FSIM notes that in Q4 2022-23, FRV adjusted the deliverables for this action. In previous quarters, this action had included a 'forecast capacity and capability gaps analysis' deliverable; however, in Q4, FRV had incorporated this gaps analysis as part of their ongoing draft workforce plan implementation.

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2023, FRV reported this action as completed but had not submitted the acquittal form. FRV's ELT endorsed the draft FRV Workforce Plan in February 2023. At the time of reporting, the endorsed draft FRV Workforce Plan was with CFA and separately with the UFU for consultation.

The draft FRV Workforce Plan outlines five key focus areas FRV will target to build and maintain its workforce for the future:

- health, safety and wellbeing
- capability planning and development
- culture, inclusion and engagement
- workforce modelling and data quality
- governance.

The draft FRV Workforce Plan includes projections for FRV staff and 20 initiatives outlining foundational work programs to support the optimal capacity and capability of FRV's operational workforce. Each of the 20 initiatives has defined KPIs and performance metrics will be overseen by quarterly reporting to FRV's ELT. As part of workforce monitoring and forecasting, FRV has completed work to forecast their workforce affordability, demand, and supply over a five-year horizon.

FSIM notes that the current FRV workforce projections do not account for the number of staff required to support CFA under the secondment arrangements. However, one of the 20 recommended initiatives is to ensure a pipeline of capable ACFOs and Commanders with the requisite skills and capabilities to support CFA to deliver services in the CAoV. FRV has initiated work with CFA to understand and forecast CFA's needs to inform the draft FRV Workforce Plan in 2024. This is a critical intersection with the CFA Capability Statement (action 5.1) and FSIM observed that as FRV further develop the draft FRV Workforce Plan, these capabilities and skills should be specifically identified and accounted for.

Implementing the draft FRV Workforce Plan supports, and is supported by, other organisational-wide strategic plans such as the FRV Strategic Plan 2022-2032 and draft FRV DEI Strategy.

In February 2023, FRV provided the draft FRV Workforce Plan to CFA for consultation. In June 2023, FRV was awaiting feedback from CFA. CFA advised FRV in June 2023 that they were consolidating feedback and will provide it to FRV in FY2023-24.

Findings

FSIM finds action 5.4 is partially implemented as FRV removed the 'forecast capacity and capability gaps' deliverables, intended for delivery in Q4 FY 2022-23, to a BAU activity in FY 2023-24. Given these fundamental pieces of work are not yet complete and significantly contribute to FRV achieving the action's objective, FSIM will return to assess the effectiveness of this action in the short term.

FRV's workforce forecasting model is yet to incorporate CFA's capability and capacity forecasts

In June 2023, FRV advised FSIM that its workforce forecasting model was yet to include a forecasted number of seconded staff to CFA. FRV planned to develop a seconded staff forecasting model in consultation with CFA in 2024. FSIM notes that without comprehensive workforce forecasting incorporating the number of staff with requisite skills to be seconded to CFA, FRV may face challenges in meeting its secondment obligations under the Secondment Agreement.

FSIM notes that vacant seconded ACFO and Commander positions and relief issues for District Duty Officers were standing agenda items at every HoA meeting over FY 2022-23. CFA has consistently reiterated, via HoA, that understaffing for critical seconded roles may impact their ability to respond to emergencies. FSIM also notes that ongoing vacancy and relief management issues may impact the health and wellbeing of staff (e.g., fatigue and stress), FRV productivity (e.g., due to increased workloads for operational staff), and operational costs (e.g., increase in costs of higher duties and overtime).

Additionally, CFA has identified approximately 48 per cent of current seconded staff could retire in the coming five to ten years (as noted in action 5.1). This potential risk may be addressed in the draft FRV Workforce Plan, under sections 2.2 and 4.2, in FY2023-24. Establishing a pipeline of seconded staff to address this impending risk will be crucial for FRV to fulfil its secondment obligations to CFA.

FRV received \$4.6 million over two years in the 2023-24 State Budget to fund additional command staff to deliver critical leadership functions across Victoria's fire services and strengthen the emergency management firefighting capability. As at 30 June 2023, the funding was held in contingency with approval to release subject to a proposal for staffing allocation across CFA and FRV (including but not limited to Commanders, Commander Relievers and ACFOs). Accessing this additional funding may address vacancy issues identified by CFA and FRV.

Agencies need to collaborate to ensure this action meets its objectives


As at 30 June 2023, FSIM had received evidence that CFA had not yet provided a formal written response to FRV regarding whether the draft FRV Workforce Plan met CFA's seconded staff capability and capacity requirements.

FSIM considers it fundamental to the success of both this action, and action 5.1 (CFA's capability and capacity requirements for seconded staff), that CFA and FRV work collaboratively to establish a mutually accepted approach on how FRV fulfills its secondment obligations to CFA, with a strong focus on effective provisions of services in regional and remote areas of Victoria. This entails collecting pertinent data, fostering collaborative and transparent workforce planning between CFA and FRV, leveraging historical workforce trends and incident data, and employing an appropriate and comprehensive forecasting model.

Incomplete workforce forecasting constrains FRV's understanding of its total workforce related costs

FRV's workforce capacity and capability forecasting and gap analysis, which are not yet complete and do not currently include staff seconded to CFA, are critical inputs into FRV's forecasting of future workforce related costs for the new fire services model (action 5.8 long-term funding plans). As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22, FRV's primary cost driver is employee full-time equivalent costs, which constitute 79 per cent of the total expenses incurred in the delivery of services for FY 2021-22 (and 82 per cent in FY 2020-21).⁷⁷ Given that FRV's employee costs are highly influenced by the agreed enterprise bargaining agreements, it is imperative for FRV to accurately assess employee costs (including seconded employee costs) and their impacts on FRV's long-term financial sustainability.

⁷⁷Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, < <https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 125.



FRV considered the forecast capacity and capability gaps analysis is a BAU activity to be delivered as part of the ongoing implementation of the draft FRV Workforce Plan from July 2023 to December 2023.

FSIM notes that FRV is actively engaged in regular and ongoing refinements of their internal workforce forecast model in response to the evolving circumstances and is continuing to work with CFA to develop a forecasting model for staff secondment. This iterative approach to enhancement is essential for maintaining operational readiness and ensuring efficient resource allocation for FRV.

There are fundamental pieces of work currently in progress that will assist FRV in meeting this action's objective, including:

- FRV providing a formal response to CFA on the CFA Capability Statement.
- FRV working collaboratively with CFA to agree on the forecast of staff to be seconded from FRV to meet CFA's capability and capacity requirements.
- FRV completing the gap analysis to inform possible mitigation strategies if FRV is not able to meet CFA capability and capacity needs under the secondment arrangements.
- CFA providing a formal response to FRV, highlighting the extent to which the draft FRV Workforce Plan addresses the CFA Capability Statement requirements now and into the future and identifying where CFA has additional information or data to inform more accurate modelling by FRV for seconded staff.
- CFA and FRV working collaboratively to forecast changing workforce requirements based on interoperable and complementary fire services across Victoria.

Action 5.5: Conduct an initial financial sustainability assessment of FRV and CFA.

Action objective: CFA and FRV have an agreed understanding of financial sustainability and how this may be achieved, with an evidence-based cost and performance baseline.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
December 2021	December 2021	Completed

Findings

Action 5.5 is closed.

Action 5.6: Develop an initial funding plan that addresses high priority funding requirements for CFA and FRV in years three and four of the Fire Services Reform and addresses the impact of: (a) transfers of functions, resources and assets between CFA and FRV; (b) the change to the FRV fire district upon the fire services property levy revenue base after the commencing day; and (c) any changes to the differential rates of the fire services property levy after the commencing day.

Action objective: CFA and FRV have funding plans for years three and four that are evidence-based and based upon an independent review.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
December 2021	December 2021	Completed

Findings

Action 5.6 is closed.

Action 5.7: Conduct a financial sustainability assessment update of FRV and CFA, based on three years operation of the new fire services model.

Action objective: CFA and FRV have an agreed understanding of financial sustainability, updated and evidenced by operation of the new fire services model over a continued period of time.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
December 2023	December 2024	Not commenced

Context

This action requires DJCS, working with CFA and FRV, to conduct a second financial sustainability assessment of CFA and FRV based on three years of operation of the new fire services model. In delivering this action, CFA and FRV will have an agreed understanding of financial sustainability, updated and evidenced by operation of the new fire services model over a continued period of time.

Progress summary

An estimated commencement date is dependent on data availability, outcomes from action 5.2, and based on three years of operation data of the new fire services model (the period from FY2020-21 to FY2022-23).

In FY 2022-23, DJCS submitted a change request to the Minister to extend the due date for this action. By delaying the implementation of action 5.7 by 12 months, agencies would have the opportunity to enhance their financial forecasting model, access relevant data and ensure the completion of interdependent actions such as actions 1.7, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. The Year Two to Five Plan reflects the new completion date of December 2024.

As noted in FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22⁷⁸, effective planning for longer-term financial sustainability requires CFA and FRV to enhance their data collection capabilities, develop an evidence-based understanding of cost and demand, and demonstrate supports required to be financially sustainable. These activities, undertaken promptly and effectively, will assist DJCS in completing this action. FSIM will review progress against this action once work has commenced.

Findings

Action 5.7 has not yet commenced.

⁷⁸Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, < <https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 113.

Action 5.8: Develop a long-term funding plan for CFA and FRV.

Action objective: CFA and FRV have long-term funding plans that are evidence-based and outline actions to promote financial sustainability.

Lead agency: DJCS with CFA and FRV

Year Two to Five Plan (November 2021) completion date	Year Two to Five Plan (updated May 2023) completion date	Agency reported status as at 30 June 2023
December 2023	June 2025	Not commenced

Context

This action requires DJCS, working with CFA and FRV, to develop long-term funding plans for CFA and FRV that are evidence-based and outline actions to promote financial sustainability.

Progress summary

In FY 2022-23, DJCS submitted a change request to the Minister to extend the due date for this action, attributing the delays primarily to the impact of extended timelines for conducting a second financial sustainability assessment (action 5.7) and the completion of interdependent Year Two to Five Plan actions (action 1.7, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4). The Year Two to Five Plan reflects the new completion date of June 2025, noting the original completion date was December 2023.

The initial funding plans for CFA and FRV (action 5.6) required CFA and FRV to enhance asset management, financial forecasting, and activity-based costing. This work is in progress but will impact the delivery of the second financial sustainability assessment (action 5.7), which is a necessary input to completing the long-term funding plans for CFA and FRV.

Findings

Action 5.8 has not yet commenced.

7. Impact of reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV

Assessing impact of reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV

Section 131(1)(iii) of the FRV Act requires FSIM to “*monitor and review the progress of FRV and CFA in carrying out the implementation Plan, including by assessing the impact of fire services reforms upon the financial sustainability of FRV and CFA*”.

In FY 2022-23, FSIM engaged with CFA, DJCS and FRV to inform its approach to assessing the impacts of changes implemented by the reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV. FSIM also sought clarity on the scope of work CFA, DJCS and FRV are undertaking regarding understanding and supporting the future financial sustainability of CFA and FRV.

As noted in the FSIM Annual Report 2021/2022, there are significant gaps in CFA’s and FRV’s service delivery costs and cost drivers, and challenges in identifying emerging cost exposures under the new fire services model.⁷⁹ CFA and FRV are currently working with DJCS to focus on uplifting their respective financial planning and forecasting capabilities.

CFA, DJCS and FRV continue to progress work relating to Year Two to Five Plan actions 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4. The outputs of these actions are necessary inputs to, and have significant interdependencies with, action 5.7.

Given the early stages of work to address data gaps, quantify costs and drivers and uplift forecasting capabilities, FSIM considers, at the time of reporting, there is currently insufficient information to make an informed assessment of the impact of reform on the financial sustainability of CFA and FRV. FSIM will continue to monitor these work programs, noting that assessing the impact of fire services reforms on the financial sustainability of FRV and CFV is a long-term proposition.

⁷⁹Fire Services Implementation Monitor, 2023, *Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22*, Victorian Government, viewed 8 August 2023, < <https://www.vic.gov.au/fire-services-implementation-monitor-annual-report-2021-22>>, pg. 129.

8. Concluding remarks

FSIM provides the Victorian government and community with an independent assessment of the Fire Services Reform implementation progress.

Three years into a ten-year fire services reform program, CFA, DJCS and FRV have progressed Year Two to Five Plan action delivery. As of 30 June 2023, CFA, DJCS and FRV have completed 15 of 41 Year Two to Five Plan actions. FSIM will evaluate the effectiveness of these completed actions in future reports.

CFA and FRV have developed foundational strategies to shape their cultural and strategic directions and recognise the contributions of volunteers and staff. FRV completed its inaugural FRV Strategy and has undertaken initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. CFA continues to improve its number of women in brigade leadership roles and developed its D&I Strategy, which actively promotes, supports, and enables diversity in the organisation to reflect its community.

The Fire Services Reform made significant foundational changes. These changes include reinstating CFA as a volunteer firefighting agency and establishing the Secondment Agreement for the secondment of FRV staff to provide operational and management support to CFA volunteers. The FRV Operational EA stipulates that FRV manages the performance and conduct of staff seconded to CFA. This provision affects the ability of the CO, CFA to oversee the performance and appointment of seconded staff under their command.

Furthermore, the reform also transferred legislative functions from CFA to FRV, but as of 30 June 2023, CFA cannot delegate some legislative powers to FRV for end-to-end service delivery of functions transferred in the CAoV for dangerous goods and caravan parks. As a result, CFA and FRV share service delivery roles. Shared delivery of land use planning services as a result of the transfer of resources on 1 July 2020 also continued to cause challenges for the agencies. Since the inception of the reform, there has been a declining trend in referral compliance with statutory timeframes where these services are shared.

FSIM notes that volunteers and career firefighters continue to respond to incidents regardless of workarounds or delays in implementing the reform.

FSIM recognises these barriers fundamentally impact whether the reform will achieve its outcomes for a modern, integrated, and sustainable fire service. Several pending reform-related harmonisation and operational activities (e.g., harmonisation, delegations, strategic workforce planning and capability planning) are yet to be completed. FSIM plans to conduct a more detailed evaluation in FY 2023-24 and will request evidence from agencies to assess the quantifiable impact of reform barriers.

At this point of reform, and to help Victoria's fire services agencies make the most of their progress so far, a comprehensive review of the Year Two to Five Plan and remaining implementation actions would be beneficial. This review should assess which remaining implementation plan activities most significantly contribute to the intended success at year five for each priority area and the plan updated with pragmatic and achievable timelines to focus on those activities. The review should be guided by the broader outcomes in the Fire Services Statement, leverage a shared definition of complementary fire services and consider the impacts of other enabling instruments (e.g., Secondment Agreement, legislative arrangements and limitations).

FSIM acknowledges CFA, DJCS and FRV for their ongoing cooperation and active contribution to this Year Three report's monitoring and reporting activities. FSIM acknowledges the volunteer and career firefighters across Victoria who continue to provide high-quality fire services to the community and work tirelessly to keep Victorians safe.

9. Appendix A: Glossary

Acronym	Title
ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
BA	Breathing apparatus
BAU	Business as usual
Building Act	<i>Building Act 1993</i>
CAoV	Country Area of Victoria
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CO, CFA	CFA Chief Officer
Co-located stations	For the purposes of this report, co-located stations refer to those stations which were formerly CFA integrated stations
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CSBA	Community Safety Building Authority
D&I Strategy	CFA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2025
DEI Strategy	FRV Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy FY 2023 - 2032
Division A	Former MFB staff managed under Part A of the <i>Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020</i>
Division B	Former CFA staff covered under Part B of the <i>Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020</i>
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
EA	Enterprise Agreement
FRB	Firefighters Registration Board
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
FRV Act	<i>Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958</i>
ELT	FRV Executive Leadership Team
FRV Corporate EA	<i>Fire Rescue Victoria Corporate and Technical Employees Agreement</i>
FRV Operational EA	<i>Fire Rescue Victoria Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020</i>
FRV Strategy	FRV Strategic Plan 2022-2032
FRV Workforce Plan	FRV Strategic Workforce Plan (Operations) 2022-2027
FSIM	Fire Services Implementation Monitor
FSIM's Annual Report 2020/21	<i>Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2020-21: Setting the foundations</i>
FSIM's Annual Report 2021/22	<i>Fire Services Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2021/22</i>
FSOC	Fire Services Operational Committee
FWC	Fair Work Commission
FY	Financial year
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025
GFF	General Fire Fighters course
HAZMAT	Hazardous materials
HoA	CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee
ICT	Information and communications technology
IT	Information technology
IPs	Interoperability procedures
JSOPs	Joint Standard Operating Procedures
MFB	Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Minister	Minister for Emergency Services

Acronym	Title
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
Network	FRV's Women's Support Coordinator Network
OOSA	Overarching Operational Services Agreement
P350 program	350 Firefighter Program – Capital Sub-Program
PAD	Practical Areas for Drills
PPC	Personal protective clothing
PTA	Professional, technical and administrative
Regulations	<i>Fire Rescue Victoria (Firefighters Registration Board) Regulations 2022</i>
RRAP	Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SEC	Fire Services Strategic Executive Committee
SLDA	Service Level Deed of Agreement
SO	Station Officer
SSO	Senior Station Officer
STO	Station Turn Out
Structural PPC	Structural Personal Protective Clothing
SWH	Safe Working at Heights
Tenancy Agreement	The Lease and Licensing Agreement for the 34 co-located stations ⁸⁰
ToR	Terms of Reference
UFU	United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch
Vacancy and relief	<p>The Secondment Agreement relates to various categories of staff seconded to CFA. For the purposes of this report, the terms 'vacancy' and 'relief' relate specifically to only Commander and ACFO positions seconded to CFA from FRV as defined under the Secondment Agreement.</p> <p>'Vacancy' refers to the situation where a substantive Commander or ACFO position (as defined under the Secondment Agreement) does not have an FRV seconded staff member formally appointed to that role.</p> <p>'Relief' refers to the situation where a Commander or ACFO seconded to CFA is absent from their substantive position (for example, on extended leave) and FRV is required to provide a suitably qualified employee to backfill the position.</p>
VFBV	Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
VPCFRB	Victorian Professional Career Firefighters Registration Board Ltd
VSP	Volunteer Support Package
VTA	Volunteer Trainer and Assessors
Wildfire PPC	Wildfire Personal Protective Clothing
WWCC	Working with Children Check
Year Two to Five Plan	Minister for Emergency Services' <i>Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan, updated in May 2023</i>

⁸⁰There are 33 CFA brigades at sites that are now operated by FRV and one co-located site (Lara) where CFA retains the asset and FRV is the tenant.



**Fire Services
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