

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee – Questions on Notice

Emergency Services

- 1. Please indicate the cost per head of recruiting and training new firefighters. What are the costs incurred to date of recruiting the additional 450 firefighters and the cost across the forward estimates?**

(Pages 5-6 of the Emergency Services portfolio transcript)

There is no singular unit cost of recruiting and training a firefighter, as variables may apply at each recruitment occasion and requirements and costs vary between CFA and MFB.

- 2. Please describe what work is being done to improve the capacity for volunteers and paid service personnel to work together?**

(Pages 11-12 of the Emergency Services portfolio transcript)

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) was established under the leadership of the Emergency Management Commissioner. EMV has responsibility for coordinating the preparation and response to major emergencies. Its role includes developing procedures so that Victorian emergency services work seamlessly together in responding to incidents. EMV has played a key role in improving the way our fire services work together. Areas of progress in recent years include a MFB/CFA secondment program, a joint recruitment course for career firefighters, and the standardisation of equipment.

An enormous amount of energy and action has gone into developing an ethos of "working as one" across the emergency management sector. There have been numerous ongoing interactions with volunteers and paid staff to solicit and understand the views and needs of volunteers and paid staff. These include leadership forums, surveys, the ongoing work of the Volunteer Consultative Forum, which is chaired by the Emergency Management Commissioner, operational debriefs and reviews.

The focus of an integrated, inclusive, all communities, all emergencies approach across the sector is evident in the doctrine that EMV develops to support operations. The procedures, processes and protocols in the doctrine are regularly reviewed and improved through input by volunteers and paid staff. The doctrine is readily accessible to all online through the EMV web page.

Building on the concept of "working as one", EMV has developed a Diversity and Inclusion framework that recognises the important contributions volunteers and paid staff make to the emergency management sector across the before, during and after phases of an emergency. The focus of the framework is to create an environment of respect and inclusion.

Since 2016, the CFA Policy and Performance Consultative Committee has brought volunteers and paid firefighters together with CFA management and the Government so they can jointly plan for the future of the CFA.

Another significant example of creating a better and inclusive operating environment is development of an online Common Operating Picture (EMCOP) which provides situational awareness on a range of emergencies and is accessible to all. EMCOP contains information on the before, during and after phases of an emergency and enables individuals to have appropriate information to make better decisions in their role as a volunteer or paid staff member. EMCOP places people on an equal footing whether volunteer or paid.

A similar inclusive capability has been established among volunteers and paid staff in the debriefing of incidents through the Lessons Learnt Management system. This is available to both volunteer and paid staff and is easy to access and use. The feedback gathered through this system, forms the basis for continuous improvement and addresses one of the recommendations contained in the Jones Inquiry regarding the facilitation of volunteers to have an influence over operational improvement.

There are grants programs available to emergency services volunteers to support volunteers to access similar equipment to paid staff, such as thermal imaging cameras, rapid entry tools and road crash rescue equipment.

Training is another opportunity that drives greater interoperability among volunteers and paid staff. Activities such as the summer pre-season briefings and exercises, training on the Immersive simulator and participation in a range of state wide exercises aim to bring volunteers and paid staff together to provide them with a joint understanding of operational requirements.

The importance of training as a vehicle to nurture integration and joined up outcomes will continue to be supported by Government through the establishment of the Victorian Emergency Management Institute at Mt. Macedon and the new Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre in Ballan. Joint training opportunities between volunteers and paid staff from across the emergency management sector will continue to build joined up and inter operable capability.

The Victorian Government understands the important roles volunteers and paid staff play in the emergency management sector and is constantly looking at ways to improve and integrate their capability.

3. With respect to the proposed enterprise bargaining agreement for the CFA:

a. Please provide a breakdown of the costing for the agreement

Summary of Cost and Benefits

Estimated Aggregates	Summary of costs over the life of the ag
Costs – Salary and Allowances	219,235,725
Benefits	55,595,135
New Benefits	-163,640,590

b. Please indicate how much is for salary conditions and allowances above inflation?

(Pages 14-15 of the Emergency Services portfolio transcript)

Given that the Departmental Funding Model (DFM) indexation rate (currently 2.5 per cent per annum compounding) is applied in determining the additional cost of the EBA for CFA and that the DFM rate approximates the CPI forecast over the forward estimates, the above costing of \$164m approximately equals the salary and allowance conditions above CPI.