

Thank you for the opportunity to make an independent submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria.

Established under section 122 of the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958* (FRV Act), the Fire Services Implementation Monitor (FSIM) was established as an independent statutory office in July 2020 to provide independent oversight, assurance and accountability of Victoria's fire services reform (FSR) implementation.

FSR arose from devastating evidence, following a lineage of reviews which started with the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, that Victoria's fire services required urgent attention.

It has also been observed that changing climatic conditions have led to longer and more intense fire seasons, while population growth and dispersal across the state has magnified the operational footprint demanded of fire services. FSR introduced important legislative changes, recognising the Country Fire Authority (CFA) as a volunteer firefighting service and establishing Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) as a career firefighting agency.

Under the FRV Act, the FSIM holds several statutory obligations. In particular, this includes:

- monitoring and reviewing the progress of FRV, CFA, the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), and other stakeholders against the deliverables set out in the government's 2 FSR implementation plans.^{1,2} These plans detailed how government would deliver on its vision for modern and interoperable fire services in line with its [2017 Fire Services Statement](#).
- reviewing and reporting on a quarterly basis, data provided by the fire agencies on their performance against their respective outcomes frameworks. These outcomes frameworks provided measures and results of fire service delivery performance and effectiveness.

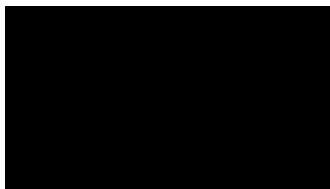
The FSIM also sits as an observer on several governance forums that oversees the delivery of FSR.

My independent reports against the 2 implementation plans spanning the first 5 years of FSR were delivered to the Victorian Parliament through 5 annual reports which can be found as follows:

- [FSIM Annual Report 2020–21](#)
- [FSIM Annual Report 2021–22](#)
- [FSIM Annual Report 2022–23](#)
- [FSIM Annual Report 2023–24](#)
- [FSIM Annual Report 2024–25](#)

My quarterly reports on the fire agencies' performance against their respective outcomes framework can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/fsim-publications>.

As the inaugural FSIM since 2020, I have gained a comprehensive understanding of how our agencies operate and collaborate. I would be available to discuss these insights further, along with the observations detailed in my annual reports, at the request of the committee.



The Hon. Niall Blair

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

¹ Victorian Government, *Year One Fire Services Implementation Plan*, 2020

² Victorian Government, *Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan*, 2023