



Parliamentary Budget Office

CFA grant funding

2020–21 to 2023–24

Parliamentary Budget Office

We provide independent fiscal, economic and financial advice to all members of the Parliament of Victoria. Our objective is to inform policy development and public debate in parliament and the community.

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CFA grant funding

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) is an emergency service operating in outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Most of the workforce are volunteers.

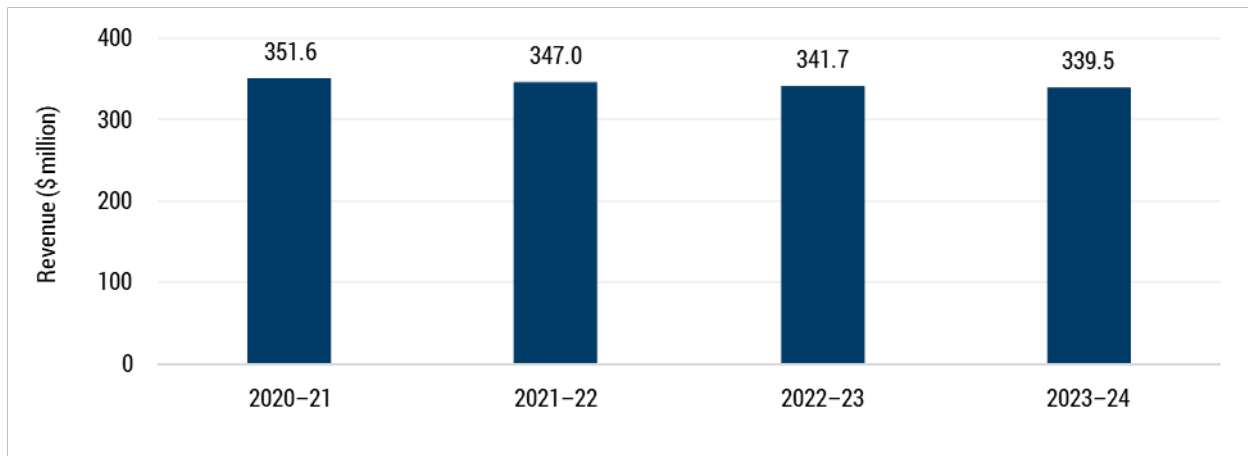
The Victorian Government provides grant funding to the CFA through the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. The CFA reports grant funding received each year in its annual report.

The CFA's 2024–25 annual report has not yet been publicly released – 2023–24 is the latest available annual report.

Comprehensive operating statement

The comprehensive operating statement summarises the financial performance of an entity. It includes grant funding to the CFA. According to the past 4 annual reports, grants to the CFA have declined in each year since 2020–21.

Figure 1 – Grant funding to the CFA



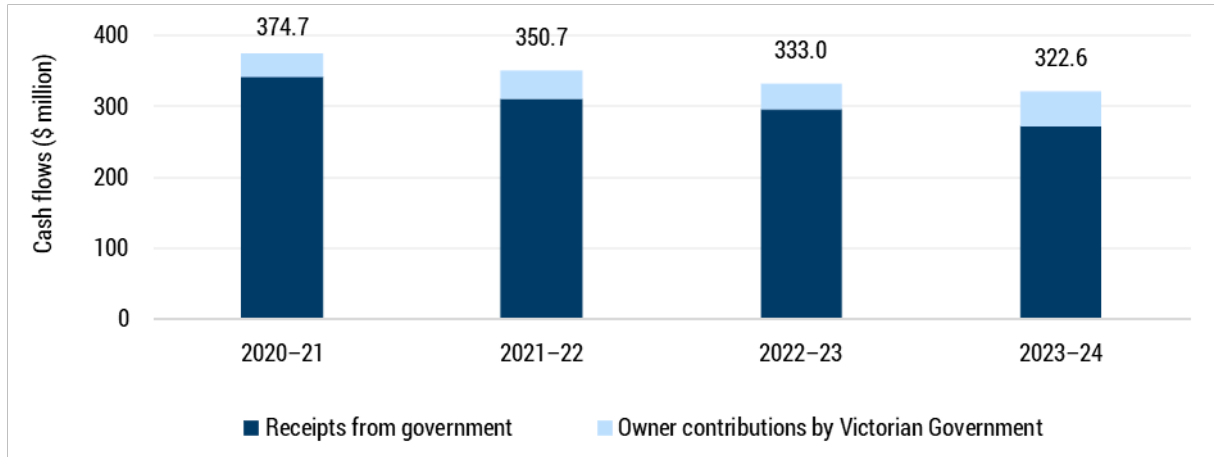
Source: Country Fire Authority.

In 2023–24, grant funding to the CFA was \$339.5 million, down \$12.1 million on 2020–21. On 5 June 2024, Treasurer Jaclyn Symes answered a question on notice in parliament, stating that the Victorian Government's estimated grant payments to the CFA for 2024–25 would be \$337.6 million.

Cash flow statement

The CFA's cash flow statement summarises cash received and cash payments in each year. It shows a breakdown of cash receipts from government for operational and capital investment purposes.

Figure 2 – Government cash flows to the CFA



Source: Country Fire Authority.

From 2020–21 to 2023–24, government cash payments to the CFA decreased in each year, from \$374.7 million in 2020–21 to \$322.6 million in 2023–24. This reflects:

- a decrease in operating cash receipts from the government from \$341.8 million in 2020–21 to \$274.4 million in 2023–24, partly offset by
- an increase in Victorian Government owner contributions for capital expenditure purposes, from \$32.9 million in 2020–21 to \$48.1 million in 2023–24.

The CFA statement of changes in equity outlines additional Victorian Government contributed capital appropriations. These included funding provided to Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA) for station building projects managed on behalf of the CFA. These amounts increase in each year from 2020–21 to 2023–24; however, when added to the transfers in the cash flow statement, the total still declines slightly from 2020–21 to 2023–24.

We note there can be a significant difference between budgeted funding for emergency services in a given year, and actual funding. This is because the Victorian Government may provide additional grant funding in years of natural disasters. For example, in 2019–20, the Victorian Government provided the CFA with \$807.4 million in grant funding – more than 60% higher than the average annual amount over the past decade – in response to the Black Summer bushfires.

This advice is entirely based on information in CFA annual reports.

Context

Request

On 14 January 2026, Ms Jess Wilson, Member for Kew, asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer to provide independent advice about Victorian Government grant funding provided to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) over the past four years.

Scope

In this advice we outline Victorian Government grant funding reported in the CFA's annual reports from 2020–21 to 2023–24.

Limitations

We use publicly available information to outline the Victorian Government grant funding provided to the CFA over the past 4 years. The CFA's 2024–25 annual report has not yet been released publicly. As such, we report grant funding amounts from 2020–21 to 2023–24.

We prepared this advice on 16 January 2026.

Background

The CFA is an emergency service operating in outer metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, consisting of 1,211 brigades across 21 districts. The CFA is responsible for a wide range of activities for mitigation, response, relief and recovery from emergencies.

The CFA is largely made up of volunteers – the CFA reported there were 51,949 volunteers and 1,288 staff in its workforce in 2023–24.

The Victorian Government primarily funds the CFA through the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Emergency Management Capability output. This output funds services provided by Victoria's emergency management capability providers, including the CFA, the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and Triple Zero Victoria. The 2025–26 Victorian Budget set a total cost target for this output of \$1,973.2 million.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action provides funding for bushfire management through its Fire and Emergency Management output. The 2025–26 Victorian Budget set a total cost target for this output of \$400.6 million.

Attachment A – Data sources

- Country Fire Authority. 2025. Annual Report. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/annual-report> [Accessed 14 January 2026]
- Department of Treasury and Finance. 2025. Aggregate financial statements. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/aggregate-financial-statements> [Accessed 14 January 2026]
- Department of Treasury and Finance. 2025. Macroeconomic indicators. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/macroeconomic-indicators> [Accessed 14 January 2026]
- Parliament of Victoria. 2024. Inquiry into the 2024-25 budget estimates [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/495dc6/contentassets/445a5b300cad4984b2c011e9ffe90e75/emergency-services-qon.pdf> [Accessed 15 January 2026]