

PETITION

Number: 623

Sponsored by: Bev McArthur

Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services

Tabled on: 17 June 2025

Grievance:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that mains water is not connected to the Bellbrae Country Fire Authority (CFA) station. The volunteer brigade plays a vital role in protecting residents in the region. The station is also a key staging area for the Otway Ranges in the event of a catastrophic bushfire, but the shocking reality is they don't have access to mains water.

Right now, volunteers have to drive into Torquay to fill up fire trucks for training, let alone for an emergency. If a major bushfire were to happen in the Otway again, fire trucks from all over western Victoria would be staged at the Bellbrae CFA station to fight the fires in the national park. Yet, the brigade doesn't have water on-site to support them. Even more frustrating is that 200 metres away Bellbrae Primary School has water, the Bellbrae Hall next door has water and the Bellbrae Recreation Reserve across the road is connected to mains water to maintain the oval grass.

The cost to connect water to the station is about \$100,000, a small amount to ensure the safety and peace of mind for the community.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to connect mains water service to the Bellbrae Country Fire Authority (CFA) station to support the incredible volunteers who work so hard to keep the community safe.

Reply:

I thank the member for raising this important matter.

I want to acknowledge the important work of all our Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers across Victoria. They are always there when the community needs them most, giving their time to protect and help others.

I am advised that the Bellbrae Fire Station is equipped with two 22,000-litre rainwater tanks, a filtered drinking water tap and toilet, shower, handwashing facilities and breathing apparatus cleaning facilities.

CFA has previously explored the feasibility of connecting the Bellbrae Fire Station to Bellbrae Primary School's water supply. However, Barwon Water advised that the infrastructure's capacity is limited.

I am advised that CFA has assessed that the current supply meets the needs of day-to-day brigade operations.

I note that, in addition to the important role the Bellbrae Fire Station plays in local firefighting response, operations are supported by several larger locations nearby that can serve as staging posts in the region, when required.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vicki Ward'.

Vicki Ward MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery
Minister for Equality

17/07/2025