

# **CFA** **Strategy** **2013-2018**



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**Towards Resilience**

## Foreword

A key responsibility of the CFA Board is to set clear objectives and priorities for the organisation to ensure its future success. CFA's Strategy 2013-18 provides long term objectives to enable our people to plan for the future with confidence.

Priorities outlined strike a balance between meeting our essential service delivery priorities, advancing the organisation to better meet its future challenges while achieving the State Government's direction for emergency sector reform based on a more collaborative approach to emergency management in Victoria.

On behalf of the Board, I commend the Strategy to all our people.

The environment in which we operate presents us with both challenges and opportunities for the future. What is clear is that change is necessary to sustain us as a community based organisation into the future.

Accordingly CFA's Strategy 2013-18 'Towards Resilience' signals a clear shift in how we understand and enact our role.

This requires innovation, working closely with others and being outcome focused.

Strategic priorities focus us on achieving outcomes which sustain our frontline service delivery while building a new approach to community resilience to fire and emergencies.

To achieve these improved outcomes, our priorities need to improve our ability to effectively collaborate and innovate, better assess and manage community risk, and ensure support and empower our people.

CFA has a proud history as a volunteer and community based fire and emergency service. We operate as an integrated model where highly skilled career staff work with and support volunteers to deliver what is needed. We have always responded to our communities during ordinary times and times of need and will always continue to do so.

This Strategy presents a specific challenge to us to really engage with our communities in order to build a commitment to shared responsibility for emergency risk in Victoria. The changing nature of fires and emergencies requires new responses. CFA can no longer just focus on its emergency response capabilities.

Together with our emergency service partners, we can support a more resilient Victoria.



Claire Higgins  
**Chair CFA Board**



Mick Bourke  
**Chief Executive Officer**



Euan Ferguson AFSM  
**Chief Officer**

## Our Vision

To work together with communities to keep Victorians safe from fire and other emergencies.

## Our Mission

To protect lives and property

## Our Services

CFA (Country Fire Authority) is an integrated volunteer and community based fire and emergency services organisation where skilled career staff work with and support volunteers to deliver the services that are needed. We help to protect over three million Victorians, and more than one million homes and properties across the state.

Victoria's early community-based fire brigades inspired the establishment of CFA within Victoria and it is now one of the world's largest volunteer-based emergency service organizations, with over 1200 brigades and more than 60,000 members.

CFA is established by the State Government of Victoria under the *Country Fire Authority Act* (1958). We work in a networked setting together with the community, and with our emergency management partners, including Victoria's Fire Services Commissioner, to execute our responsibilities and contribute to both state and national surge capability during extreme events.



## CFA's services at a glance

## Our Operating Environment: a shifting horizon

We operate in an era of worldwide social, economic and environmental change. A growing body of research is confirming the nature and impact of these local and international shifts. The recent Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission found traditional approaches to combating and responding to emergencies cannot sufficiently mitigate the impact of major incidents and disasters, nor take advantage of social and technological changes which can better empower communities to be safe.

This Strategy provides a roadmap for change in the CFA. It is based upon a shift in thinking. We recognise our important role as responders to fire and emergencies, however in major incidents it has been shown a more comprehensive approach is needed. It is essential that our

efforts also embrace a role which empowers, equips and partners with all Victorians to prepare for and survive these emergency events. Together with individuals, communities, industry, government and our emergency service partners, we must achieve a more resilient approach founded upon shared responsibility – we all have a responsibility for planning for Resilience, simply defined, describes the ability to ‘bounce back’ from an event and is achieved in communities through a number of qualities and

characteristics, including active and informed social networks, and community connectedness. This Strategy - ‘Towards Resilience’ - seeks to capture our focus on the many strengths and assets of Victorian communities into the future.

Our analysis shows there are eight key changes that are driving our shifting horizon:

### **Responding to a changing climate**

Scientific research shows Victoria’s climate is changing significantly. The increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather is impacting on the volume and intensity of emergencies experienced in Victoria. Preparing and responding to these significant events requires a real shift in our approach as it is recognised that our traditional ‘response’ to emergencies cannot effectively combat their catastrophic impact. Working closely with our partners, CFA needs to better engage communities to fully understand their collective and individual risk, and to better enable them to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

### **The growing power of social networks**

The use of modern social networks continues to rapidly evolve and it is essential that CFA embrace and better utilise this area of innovation to deliver our services. Recent events demonstrate to us that our communities receive, share and respond to emergency information via their social networks more rapidly than any emergency service agency can currently act using traditional communication systems. Our public safety initiatives must learn from and capitalise upon the power of social networks.

### **Operating in a tight fiscal environment**

Across Australia in both public and private sectors they are experiencing a sustained tightening of the economy and the related financial environment. CFA is not immune to these influences and so it is imperative that we continue our identification of more efficient and

flexible service delivery solutions which deliver effective public safety outcomes now and into the future. Honing in on what we consider are the most valuable aspects of our operation will assist us to find a balanced and sustainable service model for the benefit of Victorians.

## **Exploiting advances in technology**

The advance of communication and computer technology over the previous decade has been extraordinary. No longer confined to use by technical experts or younger generations, the ownership and ready use of technology is broad, spanning multiple generations and areas, and changing the way in which people learn, communicate, share information and make daily decisions. CFA's programs and services such as our community education programs and our management of fire and other emergencies, must harness the capability of technologies and advance with community needs and expectations.

## **Changing community structures, population and shape**

Our definition of community is gradually shifting. Once predominantly geographic or 'place based' in our sense of community, we increasingly see strong 'interest based' communities supported by technology, and a greater ease to regularly travel from place to place. Coupled with shifts in urban, regional and rural population we are witnessing a change to traditional community structures. CFA's service delivery is still largely place based in its design, with our local volunteers providing the vast majority of our capability across Victoria. We must consider opportunities to better identify, connect with and utilise a range of community networks in order to engage and sustain CFA's membership into the future and also meet the pressures of growth and change.

## **Embracing a collaborative sector approach**

The introduction of Victoria's Fire Services Commissioner and more recently the State Government's *Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper* (see below) have significant influence on how we need to operate. The need for more effective sector collaboration drives these reforms and CFA must ensure that it contributes strongly to the success of Victoria's future emergency management arrangements. Fundamentally, this requires a shift in our thinking, our practice and our approach, and is a significant feature of our changing horizon.

## **About Victoria's Emergency Management Reform**

In late 2012, following significant sector and community engagement the Victorian Government released its *Emergency Management Reform White Paper*. It highlights the need for a new appreciation of shared responsibility for emergencies with individuals, communities, emergency service organisations, business, industry and government all having a role to play.

Underpinning the reforms outlined are new governance arrangements designed to provide clear emergency management responsibilities for all involved with emergencies and to ensure the achievement of a more collaborative approach.

The Reform sets out three key principles and identifies five strategic priorities as set out below.

## Victorian Government Emergency Management Reform

### Vision

A sustainable and efficient emergency management system that minimises the likelihood and consequences of disasters and emergencies on the Victorian community

### Principles

#### **Community**

Emergency management founded on community participation, resilience and shared responsibility

#### **Collaboration**

Efficient governance arrangements that clarify roles and responsibilities, embed cooperation across agencies, and ensure emergency management reform is coordinated across the sector

#### **Capability**

An all-hazards all-agencies approach built on networked arrangements, greater interoperability and a stronger emphasis on risk mitigation

### Reform Priorities

- Building community resilience and community safety
- Streamlining governance arrangements
- Establishing clear and effective response and control arrangements
- Strengthening emergency management planning processes
- Building capacity and capability of the emergency management sector

The State Government's new direction for emergency management reform underpins the focus of this Strategy and will drive the CFA to work collaboratively with our emergency sector partners to contribute to the achievement of the Government's priorities.

#### **A national perspective**

The *National Disaster Resilience Strategy*, adopted by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011 is also an important foundation for CFA's future focus. Through the National Strategy, COAG recognises that disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for everyone. Success requires a national, coordinated and cooperative effort and will require a sustained approach to the achievement of each long-term behavioural change and building enduring partnerships.

## CFA Strategic Priorities 13-18

Given the Government's reform agenda and the other external pressures for change, five strategic priorities underpin this Strategy designed to guide the organisation and to focus our resources to achieve the greatest impact. To understand how successful we are at achieving our vision and mission, a set of long term outcomes is a feature of this Strategy. Outcomes refer to how are we improving as an organisation and making a difference to the lives of the Victorians we serve.

Our priorities have been designed to assist CFA shift over time to better achieve our outcomes. Each Priority includes statements of success and specific performance measures. A first step in the implementation of this Strategy will be to confirm and align measureable intermediate outcomes with the four long term outcomes.

### Long Term Outcomes

1. Reduce the incidence and impact of fire emergencies on the community of Victoria
2. Reduce the impact of non-fire emergencies on the community of Victoria
3. Be a highly trusted and respected fire and emergency service
4. Increase community resilience to fire and non-fire emergencies in Victoria

### Strategic priorities

- 1. Our frontline:**  
Effective, efficient and sustainable frontline service delivery
- 2. Community resilience:**  
Shared emergency risk management with the community of Victoria
- 3. Community risk:**  
Enhanced performance of the built and natural environment
- 4. Delivery of our services:**  
Improved and flexible delivery of services
- 5. Our people:**  
Our people are safe, respected, capable, engaged and share a common purpose

Each of the priorities is set out in further detail on the following pages



Priority 1		Our frontline
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	Effective, efficient and sustainable frontline service delivery	
<b>Approach</b>	Supportive doctrine, processes and infrastructure to deliver our services	
<b>Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our volunteer and brigade based service delivery model is sustainable</li> <li>• Appropriate strategies and actions are in place to recruit, retain, support and train our volunteers and staff to meet risks.</li> <li>• Volunteers are empowered with an increased and broader range of opportunities</li> <li>• Support services to our front line people are delivered in an agreed and timely manner</li> <li>• Our asset management is based on risk, efficiency and being fit-for-purpose</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	Measuring and tracking the progress of the specific activities that progress this intermediate outcome will be determined through each annual plan over the 13-18 period.	
Priority 2		Community resilience
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	Shared emergency risk management with the community of Victoria	
<b>Approach</b>	Committed partnerships supported by capable first response	
<b>Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our capacity and capability to prevent, prepare and respond to emergencies is understood and shared with Victoria's at risk communities</li> <li>• Joint (sector and community) local action plans are implemented in Victoria's high risk communities.</li> <li>• An increased number of Victorian at risk households demonstrate appropriate action to ensure their own safety before, during and after an emergency, based on sound advice.</li> <li>• Stakeholders provide positive feedback on our collaborative efforts</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	Measuring and tracking the progress of the specific activities that progress this intermediate outcome will be determined through each annual plan over the 13-18 period.	
Priority 3		Community risk
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	Enhanced performance of the built and natural environment	
<b>Approach</b>	Improved built and natural environment risk based planning and management practices	
<b>Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence based risk analysis informs planning decisions and resilience programs</li> <li>• Our advocacy drives improved planning, design and management of the built and natural environment which mitigates risk while reflecting community values</li> <li>• CFA minimises its environmental footprint</li> <li>• Stakeholders provide positive feedback on our collaborative efforts</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	Measuring and tracking the progress of the specific activities that progress this intermediate outcome will be determined through each annual plan over the 13-18 period.	

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Priority 4		Delivery of our services
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	Improved and flexible delivery of services	
<b>Approach</b>	A more collaborative and innovative approach to how we deliver our services	
<b>Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our service delivery approach aligns services and resources to risk and operational need across Victoria</li> <li>• Our organisational focus is on supporting frontline service delivery</li> <li>• Our partnerships are constructively focused on mitigating risk and building resilience</li> <li>• There is understanding and communication of our progress on our intermediate and long term outcomes</li> <li>• Regular service innovation and adjustment is made to remain effective</li> <li>• Stakeholders provide positive feedback on our collaborative efforts</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	Measuring and tracking the progress of the specific activities that progress this intermediate outcome will be determined through each annual plan over the 13-18 period.	

Priority 5		Our people
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	Our people are safe, respected, capable, engaged and share a common purpose	
<b>Approach</b>	Processes and services which support and enable our people	
<b>Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our members feel valued and share our direction</li> <li>• Our people are our leaders in community engagement and capably deliver our mission and vision</li> <li>• We have improved the safety and wellbeing of our people</li> <li>• Our workforce can adapt to risk and local needs with agility</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	Measuring and tracking the progress of the specific activities that progress this intermediate outcome will be determined through each annual plan over the 13-18 period.	

## Principles of Implementation

### Service Delivery Strategy

The Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring CFA's service delivery to Victorian communities. Against the principles contained in this Strategy, the Chief Officer will progress the development of a new Service Delivery Strategy which will set out the principles and priorities for decision-making around our mission of protecting life and property. Key messages underpinning this Strategy require that CFA will:

- Put shared responsibility between CFA and the community into practice, and consider the community as our first line of action and defence
- Ensure that prevention and preparedness initiatives are recognised as fundamental to effective emergency management;
- Focus on frontline service delivery through our brigades;
- Make evidence based decisions on service provision and support based on risk and need; and
- Work in collaboration with our emergency management sector partners.

### Our Implementation Approach

The following statements highlight the spirit with which we want to approach our strategic priorities and our work at CFA.

#### Thinking differently

Our changing environment demands new ways of working. Our messages need to have real impact on communities and we must challenge ourselves to “**innovate**” in the ways we seek to maximise resilience for Victorians. We must contribute our organisational knowledge to positively influence the State's evolving emergency management sector.

#### Banding together

We will continue our strong focus on community engagement, “**working closely**” with Victorian communities to build mutual awareness and support local decision making. Now more than ever we must listen and learn, inform and educate, share and shape each other's priorities. We will embed a collaboration ethos at all levels of the organisation, with our communities and our organisational partners.

#### Driving real change

Our organisation must remain steadfastly “**outcomes focused**” in the delivery of our core services. We will continue to strengthen the capacity and capability of our members to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner, carefully targeting our investment to maximise community value, and mitigate real and present risk. To do this, our people must feel safe and confident in their roles, and our infrastructure and operation must remain safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly.

## Implementation planning and monitoring of our progress

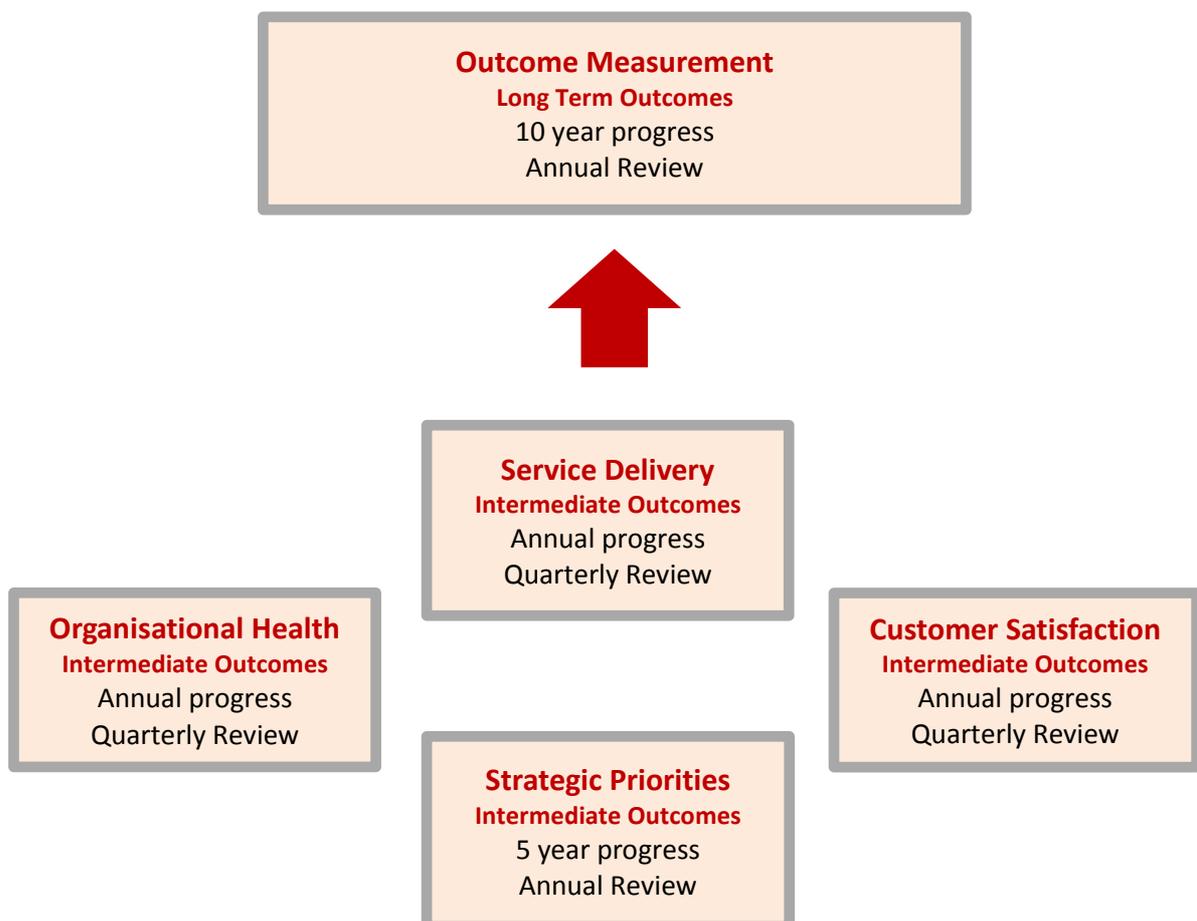
Establishment of this Strategy sees CFA embark upon an approach to manage our performance against both long term and intermediate outcomes. We will understand our overall progress against the long term by regularly monitoring intermediate outcomes in the near term. We will focus on measuring progress against the following:

- CFA strategic priorities 13-18
- service delivery performance
- organisational health (such as financial, people, safety) and
- customer satisfaction (such as stakeholder and member satisfaction, and progress in growing community trust).

Annual implementation plans which set out initiatives and programs to achieve our strategic priorities will be developed by CFA. We will regularly track our progress against our outcomes and initiatives through disciplined organisational performance reporting. .

As this is a five year Strategy, we will annually review our operating environment and broad priorities to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and retains a suitable focus on CFA's future direction.

## CFA Performance Outcome Dashboard for Corporate Reporting





## Business Framework

The business framework pictured below illustrates the critical business processes the organisation must have in place to effectively execute and support service delivery.

### Mission, Vision, Corporate Strategy, People

