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Options Paper

Contemporary Volunteer Membership Model (CVMM)



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Overview

This paper presents a range of recommended options to enhance our volunteer membership model at CFA – making it more contemporary and in line with member and brigade needs. Each of the 13 options seeks to build on today’s membership arrangements with greater clarity and flexibility, based on member and staff feedback about the current model. These options do not affect the structure of brigades, only membership of them.

Through discussion generated from this paper, we seek feedback from our volunteers and staff about each of these recommended options. Specifically:

- Whether we should adopt an option, either fully or in part, or whether an option should not be adopted.
- What needs to be considered in implementing these options, including any risks and suitability for different brigade types.
- If supported, what further detail needs to be considered.

Our goal

Volunteer organisations face increasing competition for people’s limited time. In line with the **CFA Strategy 2020-2030** Goal #3 – ‘We provide a great place to volunteer and work’ – we want to ensure CFA has a sustainable volunteer workforce that are empowered and supported to fulfil their roles. This means allowing for options that suit modern expectations and lifestyles, ensuring we remain attractive as an organisation for existing and new members.

Updating our volunteer membership model means a stronger base to deliver CFA’s key goal of being a great place to volunteer and work, by supporting a volunteer-centric set of membership options. These are things that will **help to attract, support and retain** a broader and diverse range of volunteers today and into the future.

The goal of these enhancements is to:

- **improve the volunteer experience** and recognise their substantial contribution
- **provide brigades with increased options, greater efficiencies and more support** to preserve brigade capability and for long-term sustainability
- enable CFA to be **a more attractive place to volunteer** for a greater number of people in our communities
- **improve volunteer retention**, along with volunteer attraction, along with attraction to increase CFA’s total capability across Victoria.

Feedback we’re seeking

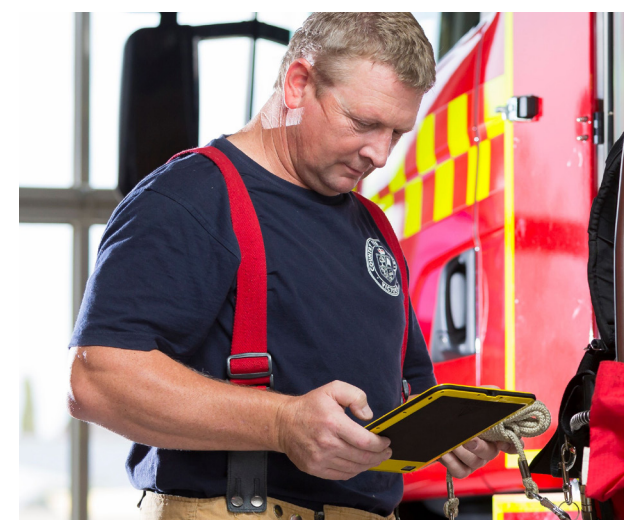
Through this options paper, we encourage people to consider each of the recommended option’s impact, benefit and practicalities – both to themselves, but also to others who may have different circumstances to their own. Feedback is invited through various options, including online at *Your Say CFA* and other in-person forums – see *We want your feedback* (page 60) for details.

We are at the beginning of this important journey to make necessary changes to our membership model and invite our members to be part of the discussions that will inform change. Following feedback from this process there will be further work to determine a sensible approach to implementing the options that have the support of our members. This may mean maturing some of the recommended options or not progressing with others that have limited support.

A practical approach behind the options

While our aspirations are high, the approach is grounded. The principle behind these recommended options is not to introduce grand ideas that would be impractical for how we operate, overly burden brigade management teams, or seek to limit what works within in current model. Instead, this is about getting the fundamentals right for CFA’s membership model, which underpins how brigades are established and operate, and how we deliver our service delivery obligations under the *CFA Act 1958*.

A volunteer organisation exists so that great people can do great things together. The aspiration behind improving our volunteer membership model is to shape the very CFA we want to have now and in the future.





What do we mean by ‘contemporary’?

A contemporary membership model is one that provides:

- **flexibility and portability** (ability to change role or location) at its heart – supporting both volunteer need and demand for personnel during peak times and as members’ life circumstances change
- **greater clarity** on each of the roles and classifications to support members and brigades
- **clearer pathways** for members to join, contribute and transition throughout the volunteer lifecycle – as a Junior or as long-standing member or for anyone who has a life change that impacts on where and when they can contribute
- **broadier opportunities** and pathways for members from diverse backgrounds or those wishing to contribute to a wider variety of services and activities, in addition to supporting those with a more focused contribution
- the ability to **maintain our standards and better align member skills with organisational capabilities** when we deliver our mission of protecting lives and property.

Part of a series of enhancements

The *Contemporary Volunteer Membership Model (CVMM)* project is the evolution of past work and discussions with volunteers, brigades, staff and VFBV about their challenges working within the current membership model. It’s part of the wider Operating Model program of work within CFA to improve the ways we work that have informed initiatives such as the Training Enhancement Program and ICT enhancements. It complements other important work such as CFA’s cultural review and the most recent review into volunteer recruitment and induction.

It incorporates extensive CFA member and stakeholder feedback from 2024 and 2025 engagement on the volunteer membership model and recognises that the nature of volunteering and CFA’s operating environment continue to change, requiring a more contemporary approach.



What's being proposed?

There are 13 recommended options proposed in this paper – either enhancements of the current model, new options that unlock new opportunities, or adjustments to the foundations of the membership model. Here is a snapshot of what's proposed.


NEW

Membership Subcategories

New subcategories that help define pathways to eligible roles.
Recommendation 10 (page 50) and 11 (page 52)


Firefighter

Eligible to train/perform all roles




Cadet

For 16-17 year old members




Brigade Support

Provides essential support to brigades for roles that do not require operational training




Specialist

Roles at local or HQ brigade that are community facing by delivering services that require specific skills and training such as aviation, IMT, medical response or Community Engagement




Life Member

Members transitioning away from active duty, wanting to maintain brigade connection



Seasonal/Reserve status


For members living outside a CFA brigade area to assist in peak periods as Firefighter or Specialist
Recommendation 8, page 42

 Surge Capacity

NEW

Dual/Multi membership policy




Helps members to perform:
Same role in different brigades
OR
Different roles in different brigades
Recommendation 6, page 34




NEW

New opportunities unlocked


A Firefighter (subcategory) could perform an active operational role at their primary local brigade, **while also** undertaking a specialist role **with a** HQ brigade.




With **Dual membership**, a member could perform a **mandatory roles** such as secretary or community engagement officer **at multiple brigades**.






A Seasonal status member can join a brigade to support part time, **during peak seasons**, adaptable to their circumstance, with a **tailored recruitment pathway**.





 Surge Capacity


A person with relevant qualifications not interested in firefighting or support roles could join as **General member-specialist** at a HQ brigade **or** an eligible local brigade – eg. a nurse joins as a FMR specialist.




A 16-year-old **Cadet member** can have an easier, tailored and supported induction toward General membership – **either as a Firefighter, Brigade Support, or Specialist**




Additional enhancements



Greater clarity on HQ brigades
Recommendation 5, page 32



Clearer defined capabilities and pathways to roles
Recommendation 3, page 24



Recruitment and induction is tailored/fit for role
Recommendation 1, page 20

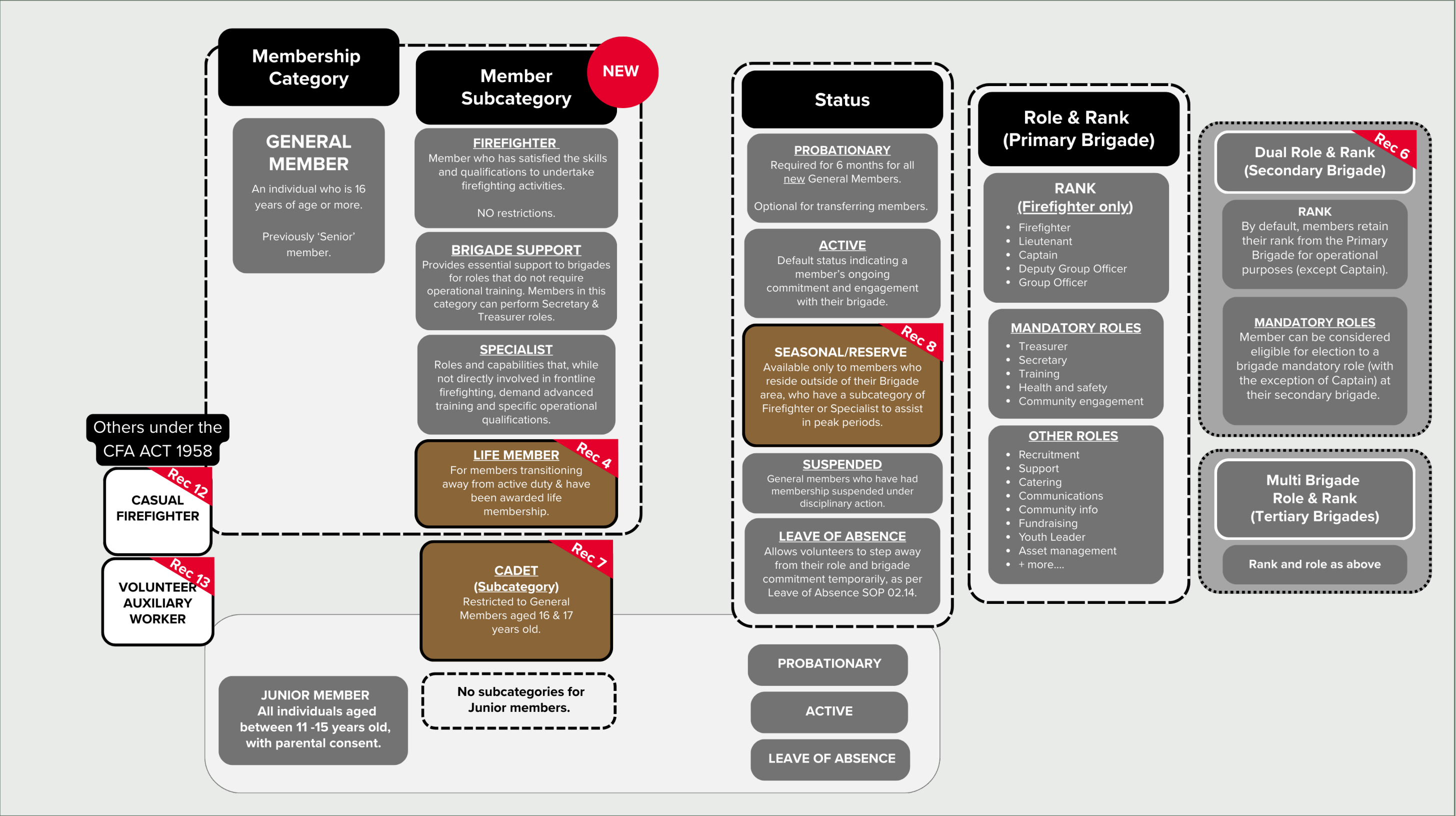
8

Country Fire Authority

9

Membership Model

The foundations for all proposed changes is a new membership model framework – Recommendation 10 on page 50.



Drivers of change

What's impacting volunteering at CFA?

The volunteer fire brigade movement in Victoria pre-dates the 80 years that CFA has existed. Our brigades – powered by tens of thousands of committed volunteers from Victorian communities – have continued to protect their communities for generations. Volunteers take on a wide range of roles – well beyond firefighting – offering opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to contribute their time, skills and energy to build safer communities.

Following the 2020 Fire Services Reform, CFA reaffirmed its identity as a volunteer, community-based service. Through the Operating Model program, we are renewing how we support and engage volunteers and make our membership model more contemporary and flexible.

Recognising the rapid changes to CFA and the communities we serve has presented new challenges for us. Now is the time to enhance our membership model to reflect today's environment and demands.

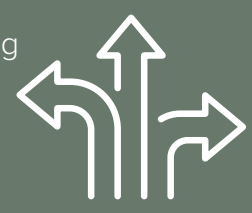


Social and environmental trends impacting CFA

1

The nature of volunteering in Australia has changed dramatically

- Shifts away from long-term, high commitment volunteering and volunteering hours trending downwards
- People are busy and often time poor
- Desire for short-term opportunities and flexibility on the rise (episodic volunteering – casual, short-term or specific roles and projects)



2

The demands on emergency volunteers are changing and growing – climate change and the impacts on hazards, additional organisational expectations

- Longer fire seasons and increased fire weather
- Greater regulatory and risk management expectations
- Greater expectations of the services delivered by CFA
- Increasing demand for CFA services
- Consistent changes to our communities and the risk landscape



3

Our populations are growing and becoming more diverse, while our rural communities are changing putting new and different demands on our services

- Victoria projected to reach 11.2 million people by 2056
- 30 per cent of Victorians are born overseas
- Much of our population is ageing
- Larger areas of peri urban development
- Increasing numbers of people living in bushfire prone areas



4

Broader changes in the ways of working and increasing role of technology impact the types of volunteer skills and roles needed by CFA into the future

- Digital proficiency and community connection skills highly important
- No longer just boots on ground skills required
- Potential for niche capabilities, not expected to be managed by brigades
- Increasing expectations for CFA to support brigade and membership needs



What’s the data telling us?

Survey results and CFA data indicate several areas of opportunity in our membership model, and where barriers exist that prevent us from attracting or retaining all our volunteers. This is a snapshot.

Exit Surveys with former members reveal consistently that the number one reason for leaving CFA is they have **moved away or relocated**.

Every year post-COVID, **less than 15 per cent of junior members** at age 15 are transitioning to become senior brigade members when they turn 16, compared to 29 per cent pre-COVID.

51 per cent of people considering joining CFA **didn’t pursue it because of the time barrier**, as found in the 2024 Post Season Bushfire Survey (conducted by Roy Morgan).

Our Say CVMM 2024 survey respondents **want more volunteering options**, with 32 per cent interested in Dual/multiple membership options, 20 per cent in seasonal options and 16 per cent in developing Specialist Skills.





See appendices / [Options Paper – Appendices]



A chance to improve

Our membership model has been the backbone of the way we work for decades, but despite its strengths the current model has not evolved to reach its full potential.

Now is our opportunity to build on what we have and provide more flexible and efficient arrangements that better support and empower brigades and volunteers, with a focus on:

-  better work/life balance for existing and potential members at all stages of life
-  helping our members transition into different roles, availability and locations as their personal circumstances and preferences change
-  attracting more members from different sectors of the community to an increasing number of available roles, especially increasing our younger members and female membership
-  Drawing upon a larger pool of potential volunteers in the community who are diverse and skilled, who are currently restricted in joining a brigade because of their location, availability or are unsure of the opportunities CFA offers

We have an opportunity now to strengthen CFA’s volunteer membership model so that it:

Improves the member experience




Better meets the needs and experiences of current members AND attracts the broader community as potential members by **improving the member experience**.

Empowers brigades



Supports them to do what they need to, by providing efficiencies, greater clarity and flexibility.

Supports CFA service delivery

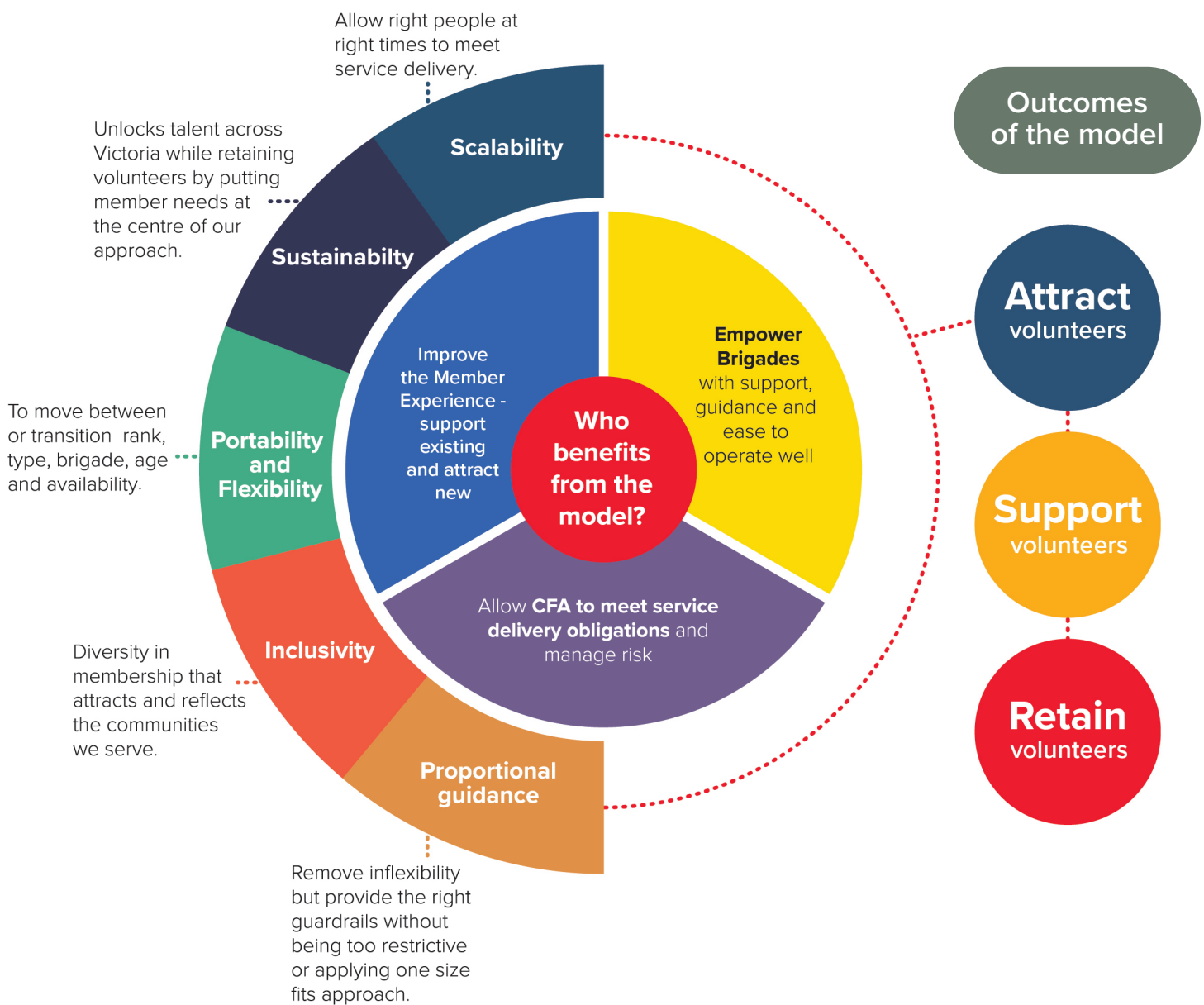


Supports CFA as an organisation to **meet its service delivery obligations** as a volunteer fire and emergency service organisation, while managing risks appropriately.

A contemporary model – at a glance

The five principles guiding the development of these options have been summarised by member feedback and data describing ‘what’s needed’ to be contemporary. The model shows the intended benefits from these options to each group, and ultimate outcomes for volunteering at CFA.

Principles of the model



A volunteer model to benefit members and brigades

CFA relies on our volunteers to deliver programs and services to Victorians and thousands of visitors to the state each year.

For their commitment, volunteers should expect support to succeed in their role, with flexibility and adaptability. CFA must rise to this challenge to ensure a sustainable workforce and a high-quality volunteer experience.

Feedback tells us that this has not always been a shared experience for all members and brigades. We’ve heard that the current membership model creates some unintentional barriers, limiting opportunities to volunteer with CFA and preventing the full potential of our volunteerism model from being realised.

The right volunteer membership model is central to making this a reality, and should be:



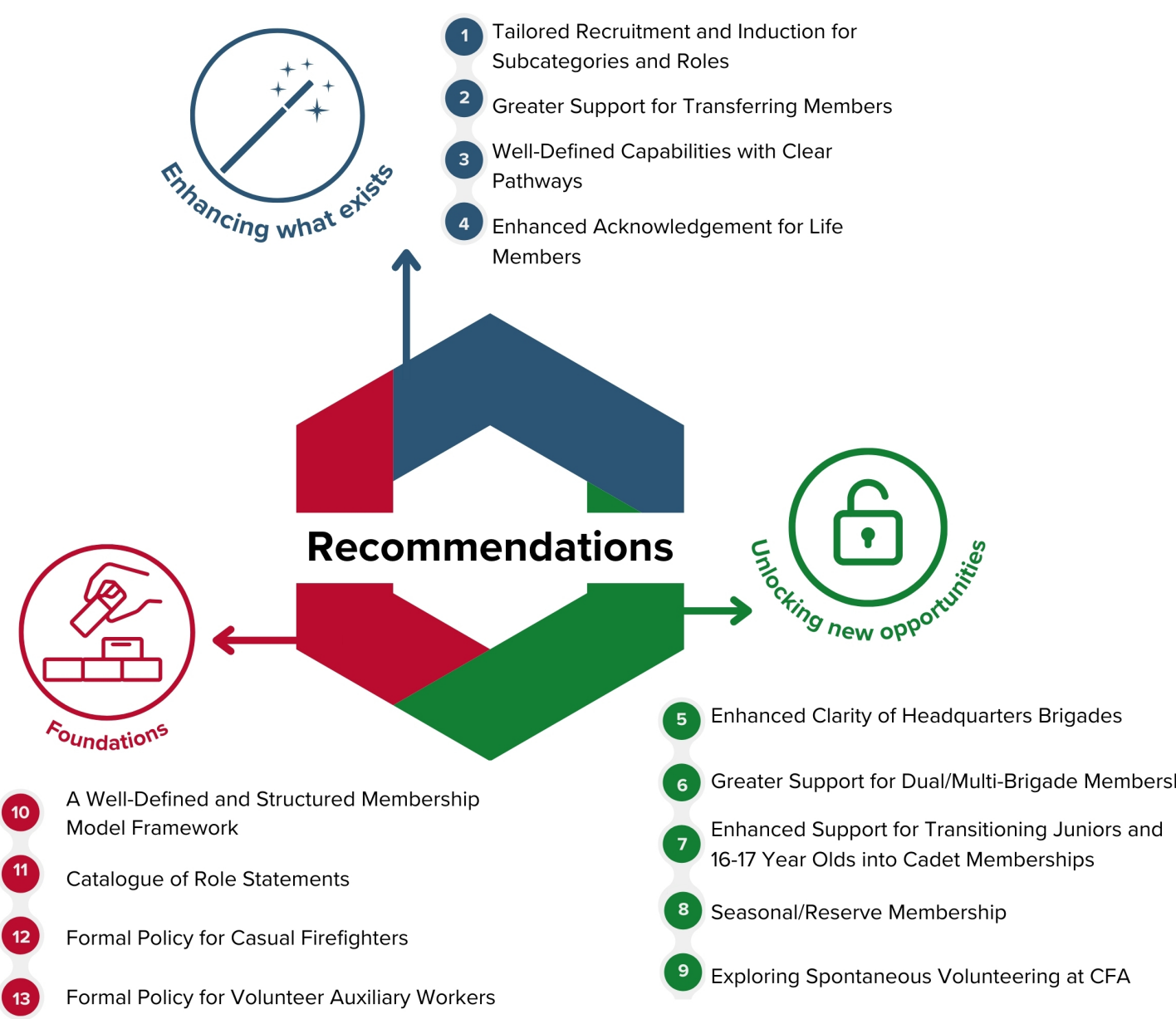
Why enhance the current model instead of creating a new one?

Recognising that our current membership model has served our volunteer base for many years, there are many good things that we don’t wish to lose or limit by creating an entirely new model or by introducing rules that are too rigid.

Instead, our focus is on introducing options to the current model that are sensible and future-fit *enhancements*. The guardrails we’re proposing to introduce aim to provide the right balance of flexibility and intentional, clear policy. The goal is to reduce the administrative burden on volunteers and brigades while empowering them to meet evolving community needs. In this way, our membership model can meet its full potential, while ensuring compliance, safety and clarity.

Recommended options

The recommended options to enhance the volunteer membership model are presented under three categories:



These targeted enhancements refine, streamline and optimise the current model to improve member experience and support brigade management, ensuring it continues to deliver value and respond to evolving needs.



These innovative changes unlock new opportunities and formalise emerging practices, creating flexible, well-supported pathways for existing volunteers and an attractive proposition for more community members to join.



These changes form the fundamentals of CFA's volunteer membership model – bringing consistency and clarity to core definitions, policies, processes and frameworks.

While reading through the recommended options:

For each option, the benefits, impacts and potential further considerations (listed as questions) have been outlined as points of discussion for you to contribute your thoughts and ideas as part of engagement feedback.

Have Your Say

Volunteer Leaders
BMTs, GMTs, DPCs and VFBV District Councils are invited to share feedback about the options from a brigade management and volunteer leader perspective.

All Members
All members are invited to share feedback about the options from their own perspectives.

- You may contribute feedback on:
1. The suitability of any of these options and whether you support them.
 2. Your thoughts on the key considerations for each option.
 3. Any other thoughts regarding benefits and risks.

Scan the QR code to have Your Say



Recommended Option 1 – Tailored Recruitment and Induction for Subcategories and Roles



CURRENT

A one-size-fits-all HR approach is currently applied to all memberships regardless of the role.

New members are required to follow this same process when joining CFA, regardless of their intended role or the classification of the brigade.



PROPOSED

Tailor the recruitment and induction processes – from attraction through to becoming ‘role ready’ – for all existing and proposed member subcategories, including Junior members.

Tailoring the process could mean:

- Making sure the process and requirements are **in proportion to** the demands of the role and member subcategory (eg Firefighter role would have greater requirements than a Brigade Support role)
- At recruitment phase – medical standards and other compliance checks to align with the role
- At induction stage – accessing and completing the necessary training and induction specific to those role requirements.

YOU MAY ASK:



”

“Do I have to go through the same application to volunteer if I’m not applying for a firefighter role?”



”

“If I want to perform a support role for my local brigade, do I need to attend the same induction sessions as operational members?”



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Improved member experience – with a tailored process to roles and member subcategories, any unnecessary steps in the application and onboarding process are reduced. This may increase the number, capabilities and diversity of applicants.



A smoother and potentially faster integration process for new members into the brigade.



Tailored inductions means that members are trained and prepared to be ‘role ready’ more efficiently.



What we’ll need to consider

- What needs to be in place to ensure a consistent onboarding experience across brigades when they are tailored for roles? What support do brigades need?
- What is the impact on district staff and BMTs to tailor recruitment processes? What support do they need? Can some items in the VRH be automated?
- If the recruitment process is digital only, what changes are needed to the VRH? Is there a support model to assist with recruitment?
- How can we manage any potential OH&S risks in support roles if medical conditions are not declared?
- How long would the transition phase be to introduce this tailored HR process?

This option in action

Mahalia* wants to join Whittlesea Fire Brigade as a support member in the role of Health and Safety Manager. Her family has recently located to the area and she wants to make local connections while using her skills from her previous corporate roles.

As she won’t be turning out to incidents as a Firefighter, the tailored pathway allows for a more streamlined approach to her joining. She won’t require a lengthy medical check and can apply online easily, which allows a quicker induction to the role and her training requirements have been seamlessly sent to her, so she can be ‘job ready’ for the brigade sooner.

*A theoretical member

Recommended Option 2 – Greater Support for Transferring Members



CURRENT

A one-size-fits-all HR approach is currently applied to all membership changes, including transfers between brigades.



PROPOSED

Introduce a tailored process to better manage members transferring their existing membership between brigades.

Tailoring the transfer process could mean:

- For existing members transferring between brigades: allowing previous medical, police and Working with Children (WWC) checks to be recognised if completed within a defined period (eg five years)
- Brigades making an informed choice if they need to impose a probationary period on a transferring member, instead of probation being automatically imposed
- An improved process for two brigades sharing relevant information about the transferring member such as checklists and references.

YOU MAY ASK:



”

“I want to transfer between this brigade and another one because I’m moving house – why do I need to reapply? Why do I need to undergo checks when they’re all current?”



”

“I have transferred brigades because I am relocating for work. Do I have to do probation again when I relocate to another brigade? Won’t a reference from my last brigade be enough?”



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Improved member experience through better guidance and support for those transferring between brigades. Removing the one-size-fits-all approach means members who relocate won’t need to repeat current police and WWC checks or probationary periods they have already completed.



Empowers the brigade to choose probationary periods and communicate with the original brigade to ensure a smooth transition.



Streamlines the process and reduces the onboarding time for transferring members.

Volunteer retention may improve, particularly for members who relocate homes and may have otherwise left CFA.



What we’ll need to consider

- How do we reduce the burden for BMTs to oversee the transfer process?
- Does the removal of the automatic probationary period pose any problems for brigades to assess the suitability of incoming members?
- What safeguards could be introduced around criminal record checks, such as defined durations for a criminal record check to be current (for example, is it five years or less)?
- What should be included in the transfer checklist or communication between brigades to ensure the member’s safe and smooth transition to the new brigade culture and expectations?
- If the receiving brigade isn’t accepting new members, how do we manage a transfer process to this brigade?

This option in action

Jacob* has been an operational member at Berwick Fire Brigade for five years and prior to that, with Wallan for six years. His work requires him to relocate every few years and will now be relocating to Bairnsdale, but he would like to remain a CFA member by joining his new local brigade. Under current membership rules, Jacob would have to apply to Bairnsdale Brigade, just as a new member would – with a probationary period to serve along with providing new criminal record, WWC and medical health checks.

Under the recommended option, Jacob could be welcomed into the new brigade much sooner and turning out with a more streamlined transfer process – allowing the receiving brigade Captain to review a reference and work through a transfer checklist with Jacob’s last brigade and opting to skip the probationary periods.

*A theoretical member

Recommended Option 3 – Well-Defined Capabilities with Clear Pathways



CURRENT

The membership model requires members to be part of a local brigade, but not all CFA capabilities are delivered or managed at the local brigade level, leading to members having limited knowledge of the full range of capabilities that CFA delivers across other areas that could be open to them as a volunteer pathway.

This limits the pool of resources that can be drawn upon to deliver these services, such as aviation roles, marine response, fire investigation, incident management, amongst others.



PROPOSED

A defined list of all the CFA capabilities that are not part of the local response of brigades and a clear and tailored membership pathway for new and existing members to connect with those roles.

It should include:

- Which areas/who is responsible in CFA for delivering and supporting those capabilities and roles
- The detail for tailored pathways for new and existing members to connect with and become job-ready for those capabilities and roles.

THIS RECOMMENDATION ALSO LINKS TO:
REC. 5 – CLARITY ON HQ BRIGADES
REC. 6 – DUAL/MULTI MEMBERSHIP
REC. 8 – SEASONAL/RESERVE STATUS

YOU MAY ASK:

“I don’t live in a CFA turnout area but can travel. How can I access opportunities maybe at a district/regional level to match my skill set?”

“I’d like to support this incident management or other specialist role, but my local brigade doesn’t need anyone to do that. What are my options to volunteer outside my local brigade?”

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

More flexibility for members to develop skills and capabilities that aren’t offered by their local brigade. Together with Dual Membership options, this may have a positive impact on retention and recruitment.



Additional opportunities to attract community members who wish to be involved with CFA, but were limited by:

- being unable to find a role suitable to their capabilities/ interest within their local brigade.
- wanting to contribute meaningfully beyond traditional firefighting and brigade support
- being time poor, remote or career-focused and wishing to support CFA in a less traditional way.



Specialist roles, not part of local response, can be deployed to support locally with the opportunity to collaborate between brigades.



What we’ll need to consider

- How do we update VRH and other CFA management tools to link members with different brigades which offer the capability they wish to pursue?
- How can we ensure that we don’t duplicate or divide capabilities that exist beyond the brigade level?
- How do we promote new pathways to different capabilities, to ensure existing members are aware of new opportunities, along with new members?
- In what ways are these roles different to the purpose of the HQ brigades?
- What are some other ways we can provide strong and formalised support to members navigating specialist pathways?



Member Story

Gary* holds a specialist aviation role in CFA as air ops manager. It was a critical role in the 2019-20 fire season in Gippsland where he oversaw the movement of aircraft over those major incident areas. Gary was able to use his experience as a retired air traffic controller to contribute meaningfully to CFA.

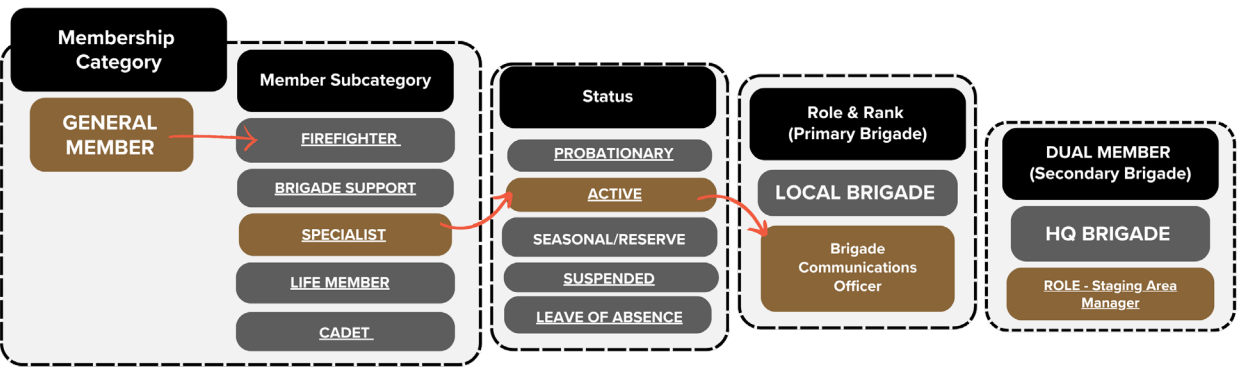
Specialist roles are accessible to all members, and with **well-defined capabilities and pathways** more existing and potential members can learn about how they could join one of these roles – either at a headquarters brigade or as a dual member, without necessarily having to hold a firefighter membership.

For example, non-fireground roles such as radio operators might be performed by headquarters brigade members or non-operational brigade members.

Roles such as staging and air base management are suitable for those with logistical skills. Other roles such as mapping officers and air observers require specific training and experience levels that could become options for some members with complementing skills.

*Name has been changed

The Framework in action

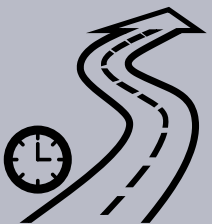


Recommended Option 4 – Enhanced Acknowledgement for Life Members



CURRENT

The current membership model does not support the ongoing engagement of long-serving members who are transitioning out of active CFA roles.



PROPOSED

Recognise CFA Life Membership as an official membership subcategory to genuinely represent lifelong appreciation and contribution beyond traditional service awards.

Further, CFA should explore a range of supporting options such as the establishment of an organisational social or alumni program for personnel to remain connected with CFA.

NOTE: There are no changes proposed to the CFA honours and awards policy framework.

YOU MAY ASK:

“What happens to long-serving members when they leave CFA? Do they stay on the registers? How can they keep in touch with the brigade and CFA mates?”

“I’ve spent many years with my brigade and CFA. Is there a way to stay part of the CFA family even after I’m no longer doing my role?”



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Past volunteers remain connected to CFA and their brigade colleagues, enhancing their social connections through a strong alumni network.



Older volunteers can continue to contribute to CFA in meaningful ways, ensuring knowledge is not lost when they retire from active service.



Brigade culture is strengthened by recognising the meaningful and long-term contributions of volunteers, highlighting how valued and appreciated loyal members are to CFA.



A member, having been awarded CFA life-membership, has the option of changing membership categories and remain connected when they feel they wish to transition away from active service.



What we’ll need to consider

- Among the existing lifetime awards and for any new categories of life membership, what are the benefits and risks for each option? How do we ensure they don’t duplicate or replace awards?
- How would an alumni program work? Who would administer it? What should it be called? Would this put additional pressure on brigade management teams?
- If a new subcategory of Life Membership is introduced, how are voting rights to be considered?
- What are the impacts on administration and technological changes to introduce this subcategory. Currently, a member is archived on the system when they ‘resign’.
- What roles could a Life Member perform?



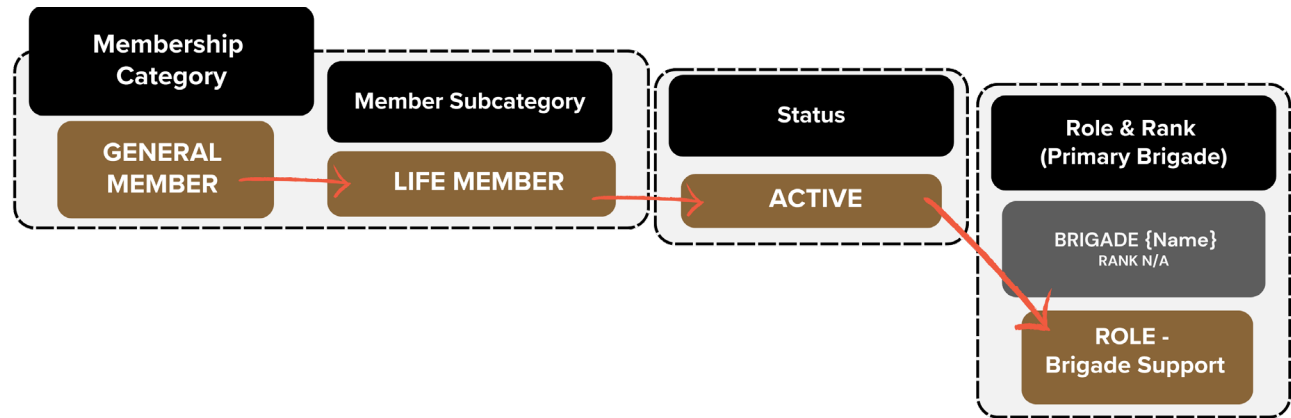
This option in action

John* has been an active member of Tatura Fire Brigade for more than 50 years. Now in his late 70s, John is retiring from active operational duty and in doing so, also giving up his role in equipment maintenance. Although John has been recognised with many lifetime service awards, when he leaves he is worried that he will no longer have an active connection to the friends and colleagues he's worked with over the years.

This Lifetime membership option allows John to remain as a member and choose the level of involvement he wishes, including how much or little communication he wants. This helps the brigade to retain local knowledge and allows him to stay connected with friends as part of a social or alumni group.

* A theoretical member

The Framework in action





Recommended Option 5 – Enhanced Clarity of Headquarters Brigades



CURRENT

There is limited understanding by members and brigades and CFA staff about headquarters (HQ) brigades – including how to enter one, where they are, what roles they perform and the rules they must operate by.



PROPOSED

Update the policy on HQ brigades (SOP 2.04) to provide more clarity about:

- The roles available in HQ brigades and capabilities and requirements tailored to those roles
- The purpose of HQ brigades – they are a capability enhancement, not in competition to local fire brigades
- How to join if you're a new or existing member (recruitment pathways)
- How to manage membership of a HQ brigade, including when a dual/multi-brigade membership is applicable.

YOU MAY ASK:



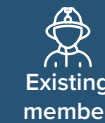
“I have skills to provide specialist support, but I no longer want to be operational – can I do that role for a district instead?”



“Can I join directly into a HQ brigade, or do I need to join a local brigade first? What are the criteria to enter?”

What we'll need to consider

- Is there capacity in HQ brigades to manage the increased interest in joining that this policy may activate?
- How do we align the training for HQ brigades with the roles they have on offer?
- How do we promote these HQ brigades and the roles required more widely for current and potential members?



Existing member



Potential member



Brigade Management



CFA org

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Increases the pool of potential volunteers by offering a pathway for new CFA members from all over Victoria to join directly and contribute through support/specialist roles.



Supports volunteer retention by allowing operational members wanting to transition to a support or specialist role the opportunity to remain engaged with CFA.



By aligning with Recommended Option 5 (Clear Pathways) it provides a greater, more consistent understanding of the purpose of HQ brigades and how they function across CFA. This clarifies the roles/capabilities available in HQ brigades that support local brigades rather than compete with their capabilities.



Processes and pathways (including dual membership) to joining a HQ brigade will improve, making it easier for a member who meets the criteria to explore appropriate opportunities.



Member story – The role of D17 HQ Brigade

Graeme Lewis and David Eltringham are the Captain and Secretary (respectively) of the District 17 Headquarters Brigade which has 28 members, 17 of whom have been brigade management team members in other brigades.

Over the past 18 years, the D17 HQ Brigade has assisted at many significant incidents including the 2009 fires and the Grampians fires in 2013-14. They've supported the efforts of local firefighters by managing staging areas on the fireground and providing essential supplies such as meals and equipment maintenance – as well as taking on roles in incident control centres and using their extensive experience as leaders of fire safety training and public information.

The brigade draws from the large knowledge base of long serving CFA members as well as community members who wanted to support CFA but didn't want a firefighting role.

This clear policy will clarify the opportunities and roles available within HQ brigades to strengthen their support for local brigades.

*Story adapted from Brigade Magazine- Autumn 2024.



Recommended Option 6 – Greater Support for Dual/Multi-Brigade Membership



CURRENT

There is no clear policy defining the rules for members undertaking roles across two or more brigades. In practice, some members already conduct roles across more than one brigade but this is inconsistently applied.



PROPOSED

Formalise a Dual/Multi-Brigade policy, that supports the consistent and seamless facilitation of memberships across more than one CFA brigade.

The policy should:

- Define the boundaries, eligibility criteria and guidelines that govern how and when members can hold a membership with more than one fire brigade
- Create efficiencies for smaller brigades through formal arrangements with defined requirements (eg fulfill a Treasurer role for multiple brigades) but not be overly restrictive for when ad-hoc activities occur
- Have in place technology and systems that support dual and multi-brigade memberships.

YOU MAY ASK:



“I am a member of my local brigade close to where I live but often respond with another brigade close to work. Can I be a member of both brigades? I cant find information about how it works?”



“Can I volunteer and train with a local brigade while at uni but remain a member of my local brigade when I go back to the family farm during summer?”

What's possible under this recommended option?

Different roles, different locations: You could be a Firefighter at your primary brigade, and hold a brigade support or specialist role at a HQ brigade or another fire brigade.

Same role, different locations: You could be a Firefighter at two or more brigades. Or you could hold a brigade support role across two or more brigades.



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Greater clarity and reduced misinterpretation about how and when Dual/Multi-Brigade memberships apply and work. Reduces the risk of being applied inconsistently.



Greater flexibility for members to contribute to brigades in ways that suit them. Broader exposure to new skills and other brigades/locations.



Increased surge capacity, skills and knowledge share and stronger collaboration between brigades. Also allows smaller neighbouring brigades to share resources for critical roles, such as Treasurer or Community Safety Officer or specialist roles such as rescue, hazmat or communications vehicles.



Allow members who are living away from home for long/regular periods to maintain connection with CFA, join a second brigade to maintain skills and make a meaningful contribution where they can.



Allow members to gain voting rights to secondary brigades where they actively and consistently contribute.





Potential inclusions in the policy

When the Dual/Multi-Brigade Membership applies (criteria):

Must apply – When a member conducts a mandatory or elected role across two or more brigades and when a member is part of a HQ brigade alongside their regular fire brigade membership.

Should apply – When a member forms part of the core routine capability across two or more brigades (eg works/lives in different locations) or commits to a second brigade for a defined period of time (summer season).

Could apply – When a member consistently engages in casual or ad-hoc activities across two or more brigades.

What we'll need to consider

- Which of the parameters (described above) should be part of this option? Are any too restrictive/inflexible or not firm enough?
- What needs to be in place to ensure this is not an administrative burden for brigades to manage and for members to engage with?
- Is there a need to manage voting rights for

Primary and secondary brigades – Each Dual/Multi Brigade membership must attribute a primary brigade that is primarily responsible for training and development opportunities. Other brigades are attributed as secondary brigades.

Define the parameters of dual roles and ranks – For example, a Treasurer could perform the role for multiple brigades. However, a Captain could be restricted from holding any dual membership.

Create efficiencies for Class 1 and 2 brigades for the filling of mandatory roles, while other brigades with specialist equipment could increase the number of operators to draw upon (eg FOV/MCV brigades where possible).

- members with their secondary brigade; if so, how?
- What needs to be considered to manage uneven commitment and conflicting priorities from members to their primary and secondary brigades?

Member stories – More than one brigade for these committed members

Caroline* is a university student in Melbourne, but originally from north-east Victoria and a member with of Tatura Fire Brigade. When she is not at university, she takes every opportunity to turn out with Tatura, North West Mooroopna and even Ballarat when she is in town. These are currently flexible arrangements for multiple membership between these brigades that see the value of Caroline turning out when she is available in town and local members are not available. More **formal arrangements for multi-brigade membership under this recommended option** would benefit Caroline too, as she may have a greater say in brigade decisions for all places where she volunteers, and is clear about which brigade provides her training, and recognises her service history.

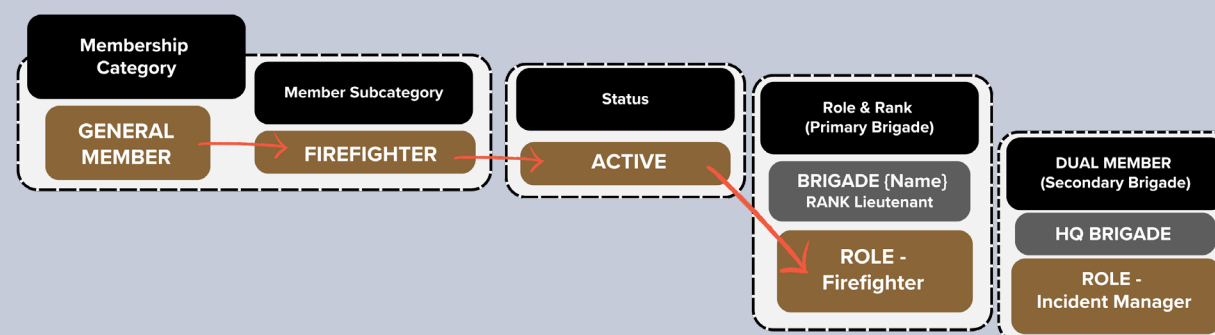
Jeff* is a dual member of Phillip Island Fire Brigade and of the Coastguard brigade. There can be issues with managing the time commitments of the Coastguard brigade, as incidents/events are often longer to manage than those on land.

By setting more **formal parameters around dual memberships** in this option, there could be more effective guardrails around helping to manage the time commitments of individuals, with greater clarity around roles, responsibilities and limits. The selection of the local brigade as the primary brigade and Coastguard as secondary brigade under this arrangement will help with this clarity.

The Captain of Edithvale Brigade has a mobile comms van. During peak high risk weather season when members are busy on other callouts, they find they have limited operational capacity to facilitate the callout for the van effectively. However, with dual memberships enabled within the brigade, the Captain would be able to call upon an increased pool of brigade members to enable all callouts to be satisfied with the appropriate skills and capabilities.

*Names have been changed.

This Option in the Framework:





Recommended Option 7 – Enhanced Support for Transitioning Juniors and 16-17 Year Olds into Cadet Memberships



CURRENT

An inefficient and unsupported process for Juniors transitioning to General membership, where Juniors need to reapply for membership at age 16.



PROPOSED

7.1: Introduce a formal 'Cadet' subcategory for members aged 16-17 years old.

- Remove the need to reapply for membership when turning 16
- Remove the need to undertake criminal record checks and further medical assessments for existing Junior members turning 16.
- Develop tailored training and development programs for Cadets to be 'role ready' as Firefighters, Specialists or entering Brigade Support
- Develop additional brigade supports to help attract, retain, develop and train Cadets.

7.2: Develop a focused and structured program for 15-year-old members becoming Cadets and preparing to move into General membership.

Support Juniors to transition into Cadet and full General membership with customised pathways, aiming to improve the retention of Junior members into ongoing brigade General members.

YOU MAY ASK:

There aren't many people my age in the brigade. Is there a way to connect with other 16-17 year olds to learn together?"

"Why do I need to completely reapply to my brigade to remain a member when I turn 16?"

"Is there enough support for my 17-year-old to join the brigade? The idea of them responding to fires is overwhelming"



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Makes it easier for current Junior members to remain with their brigade by improving their experience and removing administrative barriers. This maintains a stronger long-term volunteer pipeline.



Opportunities for mentorship, dedicated training and development of youth as future brigade leaders.

Opportunities for engaging with same age peers at Group level.



Directly addresses VFBV VolWel survey results that sought greater emphasis on youth development.

Attracts new 16–17 year olds wanting to join CFA, by offering them a purpose-built and supported pathway.



Structured program allows for greater controls and governance to ensure all members under the age of 18 are well supported in an appropriate and child safe environment. Reassurance for parents/guardians of the appropriateness of tasks for 16–17 year old children (ie not joining directly as a firefighter)



What we'll need to consider

- Not all brigades are the same. How do we ensure 16-17 year old members are ready 'soon enough' for response activities with the brigades that rely on them, while ensuring a consistent development experience as a Cadet?
- How could a dedicated program reduce the potential for inconsistent practices across brigades so that youth members across the state get the same quality of experience?
- How do we appropriately balance the costs, time and effort from brigades

required for the Cadet program's training and development?

- How do we manage the expectations of 16-year-old members who wish to have immediate operational involvement?
- What elements of operational training could be incorporated earlier to maintain engagement and ensure role readiness?
- The design and implementation of any Cadet program needs to incorporate child safe principles and considerations.

This option in action

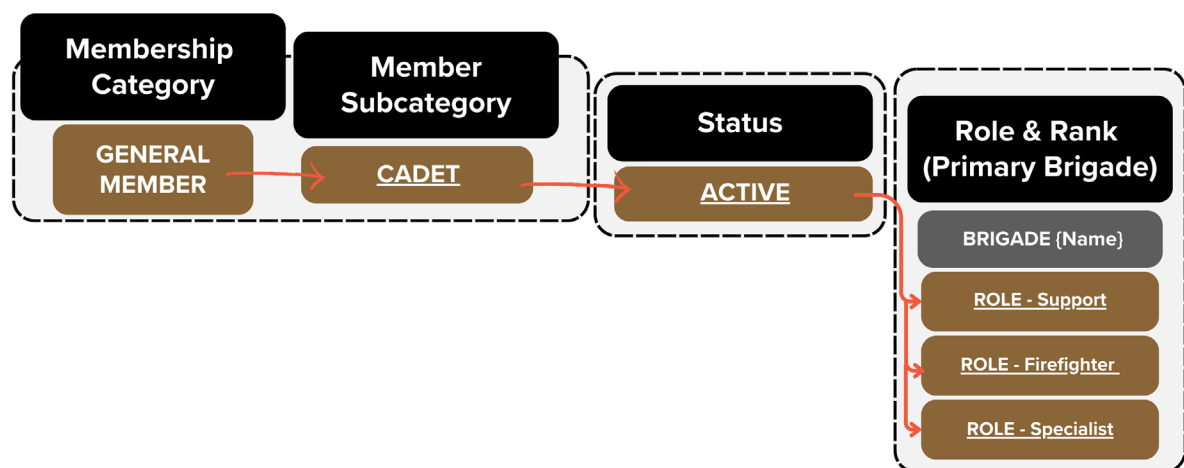
Harry* is about to turn 16 and has been a Junior member with his brigade for three years. He wishes to continue with CFA in a firefighting role, however none of his Junior brigade peers are continuing. Harry and his parents are concerned that he may be forced into General membership and operational activities with the brigade without a proper lead-in process or appropriate support..

The **Cadets membership subcategory and development program** would help Harry connect with his peers around neighbouring brigades and provide a more tailored training and development pathway to help him continue his journey until he turns 18 years old and selects a General Membership Sub-Category that suits him. This may also support some of his current peers in the brigade, along with their parents, to feel more confident of a managed transition to full membership that aligns with their skill and confidence level.

Sienna* is 15 and is a Junior member at Daylesford Fire Brigade. Having seen members of her family become firefighters, she is keen to continue with volunteering with the brigade but wants to know what roles might be best suited to her when the time comes to become a General member. The Cadets membership subcategory, together with the development program, will help Sienna explore all the pathways at CFA that are options for her as a General member and gain some new skills so that she has a smooth transition to general membership. There is an opportunity to conduct some of the theoretical learning and modules from General Firefighter training as well as learning about brigade support fundamentals and all the types of roles available, which will help her decide her next steps.

*Theoretical members

This Option in the Framework:





Recommended Option 8 – Seasonal/Reserve Membership



CURRENT

There are no formal guidelines and policies in the membership model that makes it consistently simple for a 'seasonal' level of participation from members. In practice, some brigades are drawing on members for peak seasons, but have their own varied arrangements.



PROPOSED

Establish a Seasonal or Reserve status as part of the Membership model.

This allows brigades to draw on additional capacity during high-risk weather from a wider cohort of members across Victoria, not limited to local volunteers, and retain members who may not live locally all year-round. The standards and supporting arrangements for this option would maintain quality and compliance to CFA role standards, and should:

- Outline the minimum role requirements that need to be completed or maintained prior to active participation
- Consider whether this category is limited to those members who live outside a CFA brigade area eg in FRV response areas as well as other CFA brigade areas.
- Enable Seasonal/Reserve members to engage both meaningfully and effectively with CFA as required by their role, in line with their preference.
- Establish mutual expectations to be established between the member and the brigade.

YOU MAY ASK:



“Work and study means I can’t commit all year round with a brigade. What are the options to help for part of the year?”

I live in an area covered by FRV with no local CFA brigade. Is there a way I can be involved with CFA?

I want to get more volunteers to help us during our peak summer holiday period. How can I do that?



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Allows CFA and brigades to build and access a greater (and potentially diverse) volunteer pool (including from areas where there is no local CFA brigade). This improves surge capacity during bushfire season and other peak service delivery periods.



Gives opportunities for members outside of local brigade areas (including areas covered by FRV) to train and respond with CFA during peak seasons, which has previously been unavailable statewide.



Allows both current and potential new members to who don't live locally to the brigade for the entire year to contribute on a seasonal basis – such as those who own a summer property, return to study, return to the farm for harvest or are seasonal workers.



Is an attractive, flexible short-term option for time-poor members to contribute operationally in a valuable way. This may also assist with retaining members who need to alter their commitments.



Pre-season skills maintenance could be managed by brigade, group or district to meet local needs.



What we'll need to consider

- Some of our rural brigades already operate in a seasonal nature. How does this new option impact or duplicate this?
- What is the impact on each of the classes of brigade? Is it appropriate across ALL classes? Can a brigade 'opt out' of allowing Seasonal/Reserve members?
- Should the 'Seasonal or Reserve' status be limited to firefighter and specialist roles or extend to support roles?
- Would this option be an attractive alternative to some larger brigades that have extensive recruitment waitlists?
- How do we ensure operational knowledge and skills are maintained to the required level (eg. safety notes, operations bulletins) for Seasonal members in the 'off-season'?
- Is this status limited to members who do not live within their primary brigade area of responsibility?

This option in action

Cororooke Fire Brigade in District 6 has several families that volunteer, including some with university-aged children and their partners that study away from home in Geelong. With the seasonal status, this rural brigade can retain their membership cohort with members who are away for parts of the year, but able to turn out over peak summer periods during semester break.

*a theoretical member

Member stories – The Seasonal crews in action

The Lorne Summer Crew

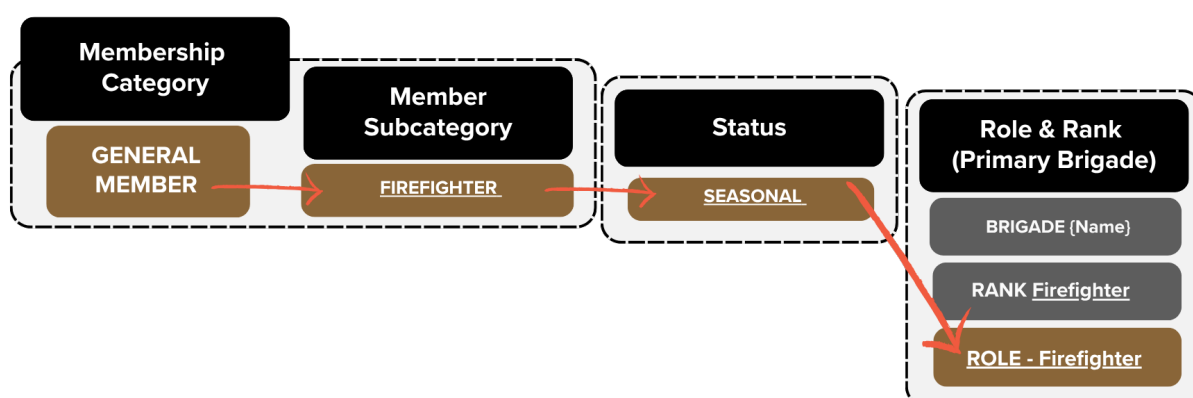
Between 26 December and 15 January, Lorne’s visitor population swells and so does the demand for emergency response. Capitalising on the popularity of the destination, EOIs were sought for the Lorne ‘Summer Crew’ and an extra truck to supplement the efforts of the local brigade members. Rostering seasonal members can be a challenge, but with regular communication and planning in agile ways, it is a great support during a busy peak.

Strike teams in District 13

Rowville and Boronia Fire Brigades encouraged a group of young people, who live in an area where there is no local CFA, to join as seasonal firefighters, to assist in strike teams. They paired up with an experienced firefighter to carry out planned burns and fight grass fires as part of a larger, experienced team, and to support VICSES in storm and flood response.

*Stories adapted from Brigade Magazine and Volunteer Feedback Forums

This Option in the Framework:





Recommended Option 9 – Exploring Spontaneous Volunteering at CFA



CURRENT

The current Membership Model Framework has no ability for CFA to draw upon offers of support from large numbers of untrained volunteers on an ad hoc basis, without becoming a member, in a safe, scalable or organised manner – eg when thousands of people wish to ‘lend a hand’ during disasters (aka ‘mud army’ volunteers).



PROPOSED

Develop a Spontaneous Volunteering formal policy (or proposal document).

It should consider how ad-hoc types of activities could be incorporated or restricted within CFA's membership model in a safe, sustainable and scalable manner.

It would also outline the potential parameters, guardrails and general restrictions to what Spontaneous volunteers can do. It must consider how the current legislative provisions and associated restrictions for Casual firefighters could apply to this category.

YOU MAY ASK:

“How can I support my local brigade with post-fire recovery or community wellbeing without becoming a full member?”

“Me or my work team/social group want to provide some immediate support just for a short time – how can we do that?”



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Access to a greater pool of resources for ad-hoc/immediate volunteering tasks – such as fundraising, campaigns, or citizen science as examples.



Access to skills, knowledge and people power for a short period, such as for a campaign following an event or disaster. Potentially frees up brigade members to focus on skilled tasks.



Flexibility – Provides the opportunity for community members to support CFA and local brigades for a period when help is needed, without the commitment of membership.



Attraction – Spontaneous volunteering could serve as an opportunity to drive interest from the community in brigade membership by providing small doses of first-hand experience with CFA.



Ensures that this growing trend of ‘ad-hoc/ spontaneous’ volunteering is assessed for its suitability and practicality within CFA.



What we'll need to consider

- Would spontaneous volunteering be something that all classes of brigades could access if they wish? Can a brigade opt out of engaging with spontaneous volunteers?
- Who would manage and support the cohort of spontaneous volunteers so that it doesn't overwhelm brigade resources during an emergency – would it be done at headquarters or district level or at brigade level?
- How do we adequately manage the safety and wellbeing of spontaneous volunteers, ensuring a safe working environment across different locations?
- How does a cohort of spontaneous volunteers affect the culture and sentiment of community support within CFA brigades?
- Could a CFA spontaneous volunteer policy provide for possible partnership arrangements with organisations such as ‘blaze aid’?

This option in action

Local brigades and volunteers from neighbouring brigades have been battling blazes in the Ovens Region for weeks. People from the community and across wider Victoria, through news of the tireless efforts, wish to help with these efforts.

A **formal Spontaneous Volunteering policy** would help outline how untrained community members could support in other valuable activities outside of that frontline, such as helping to distribute information or supplies, being a community marshal, clean up or helping with simple logistic, administrative or coordinating tasks directed by a brigade member. This could help free up the brigade to focus on emergency management and recovery.

*Theoretical story.

Member story – Citizen scientists as spontaneous volunteers

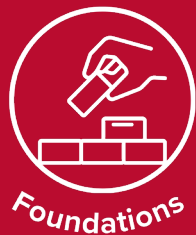
Mel* and her friend contribute to CFA as non-members by measuring the height of grass, and the level to which it has dried out (cured) in designated areas. The engagement model is light-touch, involving online training, receiving a measuring guide by mail, and submitting data via a website. Mel, a data enthusiast, finds the project fulfilling as a citizen scientist, while her retired librarian friend appreciates its simplicity and contribution to community safety.

The program benefits CFA by improving the accuracy of grassland curing maps, which are crucial for fire risk assessment. Satellite-based models have limitations, necessitating ground-level data collection. By involving volunteers across various locations, CFA can enhance the breadth and accuracy of its forecasting, ultimately improving community safety.

A spontaneous volunteer policy could explore more roles and uses for project-based help, such as brigade working bees.

*Name change





Recommended Option 10 – A Well-Defined and Structured Membership Model Framework



CURRENT

There is no single, authoritative source that clearly or consistently defines CFA’s full Membership Model Framework, leading to confusion and lost opportunities for current and potential members.



PROPOSED

Develop a formal policy (Doctrine) for the Membership Model Framework as the capstone to guide all membership.

It would include the definitions of all categories, subcategories and status role and rank options (see next page).

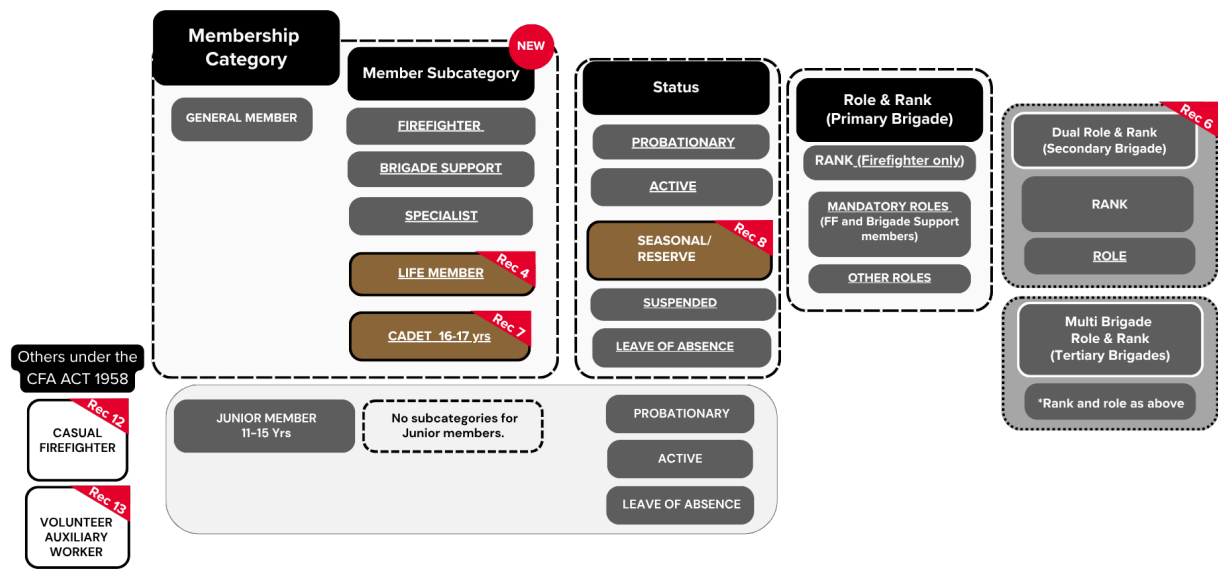
This would be supported by an update to **the Brigade Management Manual** and making various sources of the model consistent (eg Members Online, CFA public website).

YOU MAY ASK:

“Where can I find ALL the various categories, levels, classifications and status of membership?”

“What membership options can I choose from?”

The Proposed Membership Model Framework



Membership Subcategories and the roles they can perform

This diagram shows each subcategory and the roles they are eligible to perform and those that they are restricted from. Firefighter subcategory has no restrictions to role eligibility.

Role	Firefighter	Specialist	Brigade Support	Cadet	Life Member
Captain/OIC	✓				For members who are transitioning out of CFA and into the Life Membership Subcategory, they can perform select Brigade Support roles .
Lieutenant (s)	✓				
Treasurer	✓	✓	✓		
Secretary	✓	✓	✓		
Firefighter <small>Not required @ HQ brigades</small>	✓			✓	
Health & Safety	✓	✓			Active members who receive an award for Life Membership still retain their primary role.
Recruitment	✓	✓	✓		
Brigade Logistics/Catering	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Equipment Maint..	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Community engagement	✓	✓		✓	
Media and Social media	✓	✓	✓		
Medical/Health	✓	✓			
Aviation	✓	✓		✓	
Incident Mgmt	✓	✓			
Fundraising	✓	✓	✓		

*Indicative only. This list is not exhaustive



CURRENT

There are no clear and consistent definitions of volunteer roles, or their standards.



PROPOSED

A single catalogue of volunteer roles (operational and support) that are available across CFA, with individual role statements (to be developed).

Role statements may include:

- Training requirements and pathways for role progression
- Role expectations
- The required skills, knowledge, attributes, medical standards and performance standards
- How roles align to membership subcategories
- The support provided to volunteers in this role

YOU MAY ASK:

“I’m familiar with the roles in my brigade, but I know other brigades have other roles. What is the full range of CFA’s roles?”

“What exactly do each of the roles do? Another brigade I know does it differently.”

HOW WILL RECS 10 AND 11 IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?



A common understanding of standards, requirements, support needed and clear pathways to career progression – this helps with role allocation, succession planning and what’s expected.



A wider understanding of the opportunities and choices available for volunteers. This helps align roles with someone’s particular interests and skills.



Potential for bespoke or tailored programs and pathways to be developed, including role-specific recruitment and induction.



A single-source document for consistent guidance on the range of roles and membership categories eliminates confusion and allows consistent data to be shared.



What we’ll need to consider

- Do these recommendations need to be staged in implementation, or can they be fully adopted? What is the impact if brigades elect to adopt the changes at a time more suitable to them?
- How might we manage any impacts on elections and role eligibility?
- How do we decide which roles should be considered as ‘standard’?
- Can a brigade continue to define a role that is not considered standard?
- What support do brigades need to manage

- the change to the Framework and role descriptions?
- What are the practical impacts on training with more defined pathways?
- What are the impacts to the Volunteer Recruitment Hub and recruitment campaigns?
- Will this make it easier to recruit and retain, or harder to manage? How can access to this broader range of roles be fairly and equitably be managed in a brigade?

This option in action – Specialist subcategory opens new doors

Amber* is a registered nurse living in Kyneton. She has been interested in volunteering with her local brigade for a while, but does not want to engage in firefighting. She is also not interested in administration work, fundraising or other support roles. She wants to use her medical skills and qualifications to support the brigade when they need to respond to a medical incident, and her shift work at the local hospital makes her an ideal candidate to respond at different hours of the day.

The Specialist Subcategory of General Membership means that Amber can join Kyneton Fire Brigade and train to become a specialist Fire Medical Responder (FMR). She can easily use her adaptable nursing skills to contribute in a specialised and meaningful way to the brigade and local community.

Ambulance Victoria and CFA deliver joint agency training on this specialist skill, which now has 50 brigades across Victoria trained.

*Theoretical member

Member story – Bringing cultural cadence to community safety

After a visit from the local CFA brigade to a fire incident at a neighbour's house, Javit* saw the value of his strong connection with the Sri Lankan community and how it could help the brigade engage better with members of his community. He wanted to join as a member but was not interested in firefighting activities and his work and family commitments prevented him from being available on a roster.

With the **membership model framework and catalogue of roles**, Javit was able to find a role that appealed to him and enabled a meaningful contribution in a tailored way by becoming a member **in a community safety role**, in a capacity and timeframe that suited his lifestyle. A more **tailored training pathway** allowed him to acquire the skills and knowledge to confidently perform that role sooner. This meant that Javit was able to use his connection with the extended Sri Lankan community networks to build more engagement and trust in the work of his brigade and was able to tailor CFA safety messages into their language and community.

*Name has been changed.





Recommended Option 12 – Formal Policy for Casual Firefighters



CURRENT

There is limited information about the use of casual firefighters (from the CFA Act 1958) including what they can and can't do and other restrictions, such as age.



PROPOSED

A formal policy (Doctrine) that defines ‘casual firefighters’ and outlines the parameters of this term, including the guardrails for how they operate and what restrictions might apply – including who and when the term ‘casual’ applies.

Note: This is not a ‘new’ category of membership being proposed

YOU MAY ASK:

“I’ve heard of the category of ‘casual firefighter’ – when and to whom does it apply? What restrictions are there?”

“How is a casual firefighter different to a volunteer firefighter?”

Fact from the CFA Act 1958: S62: A casual firefighter means any person (other than an enrolled officer or member of any brigade, including an industry brigade) who without remuneration or reward voluntarily engages in firefighting at any fire in or outside Victoria with a Victorian brigade or group of brigades (other than an industry brigade).

This section allows a person who is asked to do a task on the fireground, that is NOT a member, to be covered by insurance and immunity provisions under the Act.



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Greater clarity for private units/private appliances, farmers and casual firefighters around when and what they can and can't do.



Clear information to promote a better understanding of this membership element – including who it applies to and the guidelines and controls for when it may apply in a local context.



A simple, yet focused policy for casual firefighters that eliminates potential confusion with the seasonal firefighters category.



What we'll need to consider

- What parameters and restrictions must be in place to ensure casual firefighters can operate safely?
- How do we provide clear guidance to who can engage a casual firefighter, in what circumstances and how?
- How would this option connect with CFA's position on spontaneous volunteers?
- What guardrails need to be in place to ensure this option is used appropriately eg minimum age?
- Are there any unintended impacts on flexibility or workload for brigades on introducing a formal policy for casual firefighting?
- What impacts might this have on rural stakeholders and farming communities?
- Any formal casual firefighter policy would need to be assessed for impacts and changes required under the Act. It will also require a review of any pending or existing SOPs to ensure alignment. For example, the draft Private Appliances SOP.

This option in action

Casterton Fire Brigade in District 4) is attending a hay stack fire on a rural property. The Incident Controller has asked the neighbouring farmer Brett, who is not a member, to assist the brigade contain the fire by using his backhoe to pull apart the haystack. He can do so under the provisions of the **Casual Firefighter Policy**.

Without these provisions, the Incident Controller would otherwise need to engage a private machine operator, at short notice. The policy ensures that both the brigade and Brett are aware of his restrictions and requirements, aware of what he cannot take responsibility for, and Brett understands the legal implications (and protections) of participating as a casual firefighter with his equipment.

**A theoretical member*



Recommended Option 13 – Formal Policy for Volunteer Auxiliary Workers



CURRENT

There is a lack of consistent or detailed information about volunteer auxiliary workers (VAWs) in the CFA Act 1958, including what they can and can't do, and who this term may apply to.



PROPOSED

A formal policy (Doctrine) that defines ‘volunteer auxiliary Workers’ that distinguishes them from the historical term brigade auxiliaries. The policy outlines the scope of the activities they can do and any limitations or rules.

Note: This is not a ‘new’ category of membership being proposed.

YOU MAY ASK:

“How are volunteer auxiliary workers different to brigade auxiliaries? What can they do?”

“Can I help fundraise for CFA, even if I’m not a member?”

Fact from the CFA Act 1958, S.17A The secretary of a brigade (other than an industry brigade) or the group secretary of a group of brigades may from time to time **appoint any person as a volunteer auxiliary worker** with respect to that brigade or group.



HOW WILL THIS IMPACT OR BENEFIT ME?

Greater clarity about the roles a VAW can perform and their roles within and outside of a brigade.



Clear information to promote a better understanding of this membership element, including the guidelines and controls for when it may apply in a local context.



Helps distinguish the term from the historical ‘brigade auxiliaries’, which can be perceived as outside the formal brigade, or have specific gender or activity connotations.



More opportunities to consider involving a greater number and variety of community members as VAWs.



What we'll need to consider

- What roles are suited to a VAW? Can these roles be easily achieved with other membership options?
- Can the VAW perform activities for multiple brigades?
- What restrictions should be on VAWs? Consider elements such as, length of engagement, roles, pre-engagement checks, etc.
- Are there any unintended impacts on flexibility or workload for brigades by introducing a formal policy for VAWs?
- Will there be guidance about fundraising activities within the VAW policy and will this affect what brigades are currently doing?

This option in action

Lorna* volunteers with Shoreham Fire Brigade Auxiliary, where she and other members have led countless efforts supporting brigade firefighters with catering during extended firefighting efforts, conducting fundraising and holding community events.

Lorna’s young adult grandchildren, including a grandson, wish to support Shoreham brigade with new ideas for community events, engagement, promotion and fundraising. With the new **Volunteer Auxiliary Worker policy**, they can now join as brigade members and be clear about how they can undertake fundraising and other support roles with the ability to contribute to decision-making about the future of the brigade.

*A theoretical member

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK



Volunteer leaders

Tell us what will work and what needs refining in these options from a brigade management perspective. We'd like to hear from BMTs, GMTs, DPCs and VFBV District Councils that lead volunteers.

All members

Share with us your feedback on how you see the options can improve how a volunteer member might join, stay or contribute at CFA.

Ways to have your say

Online – Your Say CFA

This Options Paper and all supporting appendices containing further information is available on CFA's Your Say website. yoursay.cfa.vic.gov.au/projects/contemporary-volunteer-membership-model

Here you will find two surveys to give your feedback – one for individual members and one for representative bodies.

You can choose to give feedback:

- on each of the recommended options, or
- on a specific option of interest to you.

In person

Regular updates about locations and timings will be made on Members Online and *Your Say CFA*, so keep an eye out. These sessions will give you an opportunity to ask questions and give your feedback in person.

We'll also be presenting and discussing the recommended options at various committee meetings, forums and CFA events across the State.

Talk to your representative

In collaboration with VFBV District Councils, individuals or brigade teams are welcome to engage with their local VFBV representative to share their feedback.

Email

Send a submission to the project team at cvm@cfav.vic.gov.au.

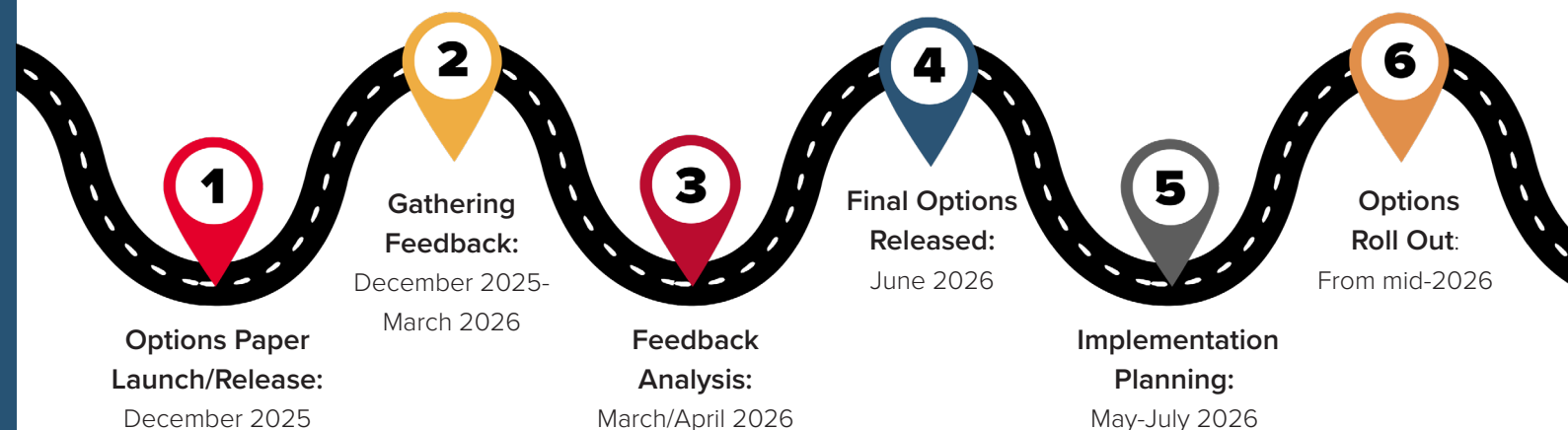
Scan the QR code to have Your Say



Following the consultation

The CVMM team will consolidate feedback about the recommended options and release a final set of options that have wide support for implementation.

Timing



The implementation approach

Inform and consult the membership – Aligned with CFA's Volunteer Engagement Framework, for many of these options that are supported further engagement will be required to determine sensible implementation plans.

Interdependencies and risks mapped and managed – Feedback will help the team understand any additional risks and possible mitigations to manage the change impact on people, processes and technology. It will also help us develop a comprehensive plan that considers any flow-on effects to recruitment, training, policy, doctrine and legislation.

Timing – phased and prioritised – To allow for any resourcing and budget requirements, and process and system requirements, the options may roll out in phases, giving priority to those with greatest positive impact and lowest degree of risk.

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