

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

Annual Report 2024–25



Publication information

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

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Foreword

I am pleased to present my fifth and final annual report at the conclusion of the government's Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan (Year 2–5 Implementation Plan).¹

This annual report offers my observations and analysis on the final outcomes from the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and the Firefighters Registration Board in their efforts to realise the visions of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

In my year 4 annual report, I reflected on some of the systemic challenges and barriers facing agencies as they worked through the remaining actions in the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan. For the year 5 reporting period I was heartened to see agencies coming together to work through these barriers. Using a complementary fire services approach, the agencies worked to strengthen existing governance arrangements to deliver the residual actions and address joint operational matters such as vacancy and non-relief issues.

As I reflect on the past 5 years of reform, there have been complex and trying times, but people have stayed the course and made great strides. However, this is not to say that the challenges facing agencies since the inception of the reform have gone away. Rather, I have observed that agencies have developed and embedded tools, mechanisms and cultures to work through these impediments.

In my first annual report as Fire Services Implementation Monitor (FSIM) for 2020–21, I identified 3 areas of focus:

- capacity and capability
- collaboration
- culture and workplace safety.

It is interesting to note that 5 years on, these 3 areas have shown some of the greatest achievements of the reform while containing some of the foremost, and in some cases constant, challenges.

It is important to acknowledge that the operating environment has evolved since the reform began 5 years ago. This said, I am confident that agencies are on the right path towards realising the government's vision for a modern, interoperable and sustainable fire service.

With the end of year 5, the agencies have now acquitted all actions and either completed or transitioned to business as usual any remaining deliverables in the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan. They are embedding key programs such as the CFA's training programs and FRV's health model, strategies such as FRV's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and organisational initiatives such as the CFA's Operating Model, to lay the foundations for sustained positive change. But it is important to remember that the reform is more than the implementation plan actions alone.

Going forward from the conclusion of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, continued and meaningful collaboration that is guided by the principles of a complementary fire services approach will be important. Agencies will need to carry on planning effectively for the challenges facing them now and into the future, including climate-related risks, changing community risk profiles, an ageing career and volunteer workforce, and to ensure Victorian communities receive a timely and efficient service. I encourage the agencies to reflect on their progress and achievements from 5 years of fire services reform (FSR) and to harness this energy to keep driving forward.

From the outset my work has relied significantly on continual collaboration with key stakeholders, particularly the fire agencies. Therefore, I would like to thank the CFA and FRV for assisting me with monitoring and reporting activities throughout the past 5 years.

I also recognise the involvement and drive of other key stakeholders in FSR: Emergency Management Victoria, the United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch (UFU) and Volunteers Fire Brigades Victoria.

¹ Victorian Government (2023) [Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan – May 2023 update](#), State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.

I acknowledge the ongoing support of DJCS through their consolidated contributions on behalf of the various emergency services agencies and entities they administer.

Over the past 5 years it has been my pleasure to travel across Victoria and meet the firefighters, volunteers and employees who dedicate their career and time to serve their communities. Their passion, dedication and professionalism are easy to identify and always on display. Many of them have been traumatised and impacted by the reform. Their honest accounts of their experience and efforts to share their stories with me has been very beneficial in my deliberations. I thank them one and all for the trust they have put in me to maintain confidentiality and influence positive change.

It has been a privilege to have served in this role for the past 5 years, and I am humbled and proud of the many achievements not only across FSR but also that of my work over this time. This has included driving outcomes data collection improvements and building and brokering ever-strengthening relationships with agencies.

I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of my office, both past and present, for their expertise and dedication to this work. They have enabled me to discharge my legislative responsibilities and to optimistically make a positive contribution towards the ongoing implementation of the government's vision for a modern and interoperable fire service.

Reflections on 5 years of the reform

FSR arose out of devastating evidence that Victoria's fire services needed urgent attention. Changing climatic conditions have led to longer and more intense fire seasons, while population growth and dispersal across the state has magnified the operational footprint demanded of fire services. Other pressures, including the increased attendance of fire services in emergencies involving terrorism, public infrastructure and mass casualty incidents,² has meant Victoria's fire services had to evolve and work differently. Volunteer and career firefighters were protecting the community using an outdated model. The multiple reviews and reports into these arrangements since the Black Saturday Royal Commission confirmed the dire need for investment, cultural transformation, new governance structures and a modernised way of responding to emergencies.

FSR introduced important legislative changes to Victoria's fire services. The CFA was recognised in legislation³ as a volunteer firefighting service, and FRV was established as a career firefighting agency under the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958*.

FSR also created 3 entities:

- the [Fire Services Implementation Monitor](#)
- the [Firefighters Registration Board](#)
- the [Fire District Review Panel](#).

These entities have served different but connected purposes relating to modernising Victoria's fire services. The FSIM has provided ongoing monitoring and assessment of the progress made by the CFA and FRV on actions developed in both the Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan and the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan and against each of their outcomes frameworks.⁴

² Victorian Government (2017) Fire Services Statement, p. 6. In response to the changing risk environment the fire services are operating in, 4 new signals were incorporated into Signal 5-5 in 2019, which is used when CFA crews are exposed to a hostile act, involving violence or terrorism. Details of how these signals should be used appeared in the [CFA Brigade Magazine](#), Autumn, 2025, p. 22.

FRV implemented their Hostile Event Strategy 2022 which resulted in firefighters [receiving training](#) in the use of specialist equipment and enhanced counter terrorism education. Vehicles have also been equipped with more resources to provide life-saving care alongside other first responders when attending incidents such as terrorist attacks.

³ Part 1 – Preliminary, s 1c of the [Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment \(Reform\) Act 2019](#), pp. 2–3.

⁴ Refer to the CFA [Outcomes Framework 2020–2030](#) and the FRV [Outcomes Framework](#).

The Firefighters Registration Board was established to administer the Firefighters Registration Scheme,⁵ which registers officers and employees of FRV who apply to the CFA under the Secondment Agreement.⁶ The scheme also sets competencies necessary for the registration of these officers and employees and the process to assess whether applicants satisfy these requirements.

The Fire District Review Panel was established to review FRV's fire district boundaries and to advise the Minister for Emergency Services on whether changes in fire risk warranted changes to the boundaries. Reviews are legislated to occur at least once every 4 years and to consider factors including population growth, service demand and land use.⁷

These entities have contributed important monitoring and review functions to the reform. While FSR has limitations (refer to 'Challenges' below),⁸ the collaboration involved in developing the scheme is an example of the relationships and goodwill I have seen throughout the reform period.

Years 1–5 Implementation Plans

To guide the government in achieving FSR, it published an implementation plan in 15 October 2020. To ensure relevancy and efficiency of agency collaboration and individual efforts, this implementation plan was updated in May 2023 and again in July 2024, following a review conducted by DJCS.

The implementation plan set out 41 actions for the agencies to deliver against the following 5 key priorities:

- Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighter agency.
- Strengthen FRV as a career firefighting agency.
- Plan and build for the future.
- Valuing our people.
- Ensure the future sustainability of the fire services.

I have reported on progress achieved in delivering these actions in my annual reports.⁹

Key achievements

During the past 5 years, I have seen close and dogged collaboration between the agencies to agree on core principles and deliver joint actions. This partnership has occurred in an environment fraught with tension, stress and ever-present competing priorities, particularly during the fire seasons. I witnessed ongoing determination to complete actions that would protect and provide for the community while the individual agencies were undergoing significant cultural and operational change.

With this in mind, I note the key achievements:

Complementary fire services

The July 2024 iteration of the implementation plan required the agencies under action 3.9 to issue a joint statement on complementary fire services. The intent of the joint statement was explained through principles that clarified the values on which actions and decisions would be based, and how resources would be allocated.

⁵ Refer to the [Firefighters Registration Scheme](#).

⁶ Section 148, *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958*.

⁷ The first of these reviews was completed with the finding provided to the Minister for Emergency Services on 28 June 2024. The minister's determination on the findings is available on the [Victorian Government Gazette's website](#).

⁸ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 7.

⁹ Refer to the [FSIM annual reports](#).

The definition reinforced the government's commitment that all Victorians will receive high-quality fire services regardless of their location and noted that:

*...[this] complementary fire service will be delivered through the provision of interoperable resources underpinned by compatible doctrine and an agreed understanding of the strengths and opportunities of each agency to achieve a shared goal of a safer Victoria.*¹⁰

I saw the agencies use this definition to work through joint challenges during the reform. In April 2024 the CFA and FRV issued a joint statement of intent that set out how they would collaboratively ensure communities were empowered to prepare for and respond to local fire risks. The statement of intent described how the agencies would 'share engagement and education programs, resources and content to ensure consistency in community safety'. It aligned with the complementary fire services principle that the 'CFA and FRV shall have common messages, shared programs and a joint engagement strategy'.¹¹

The joint statement on complementary fire services also informed the development of new service delivery plans for key functions required by the community. During the reform period the agencies progressed plans to deliver services relating to fire investigation, tower overseers, and fleet mechanical services. The plans reflect concerted efforts to ensure 'fire and rescue functions and responsibilities [are delivered] through a shared recognition of the capability and capacity of Victoria's fire agencies'.¹²

The practical experience in applying the definition and principles of complementary fire services to areas requiring joint action will position the agencies to work well together after the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan concludes.

Governance

The shared understanding of complementary fire services underpins much of the governance mechanisms the CFA and FRV have set up and taken part in during the reform period. The various committees enacted to oversee issues relating to joint training, service delivery and the development of guidelines, protocols and procedures have all referred to the principles included in the complementary fire services definition.

I have witnessed robust and open conversations in these forums as the agencies have worked to reach agreed pathways forward on sensitive and complex matters.

The CFA and FRV showed a strong and commendable commitment to supporting Victoria's fire and rescue capability¹³ when it was recently agreed at the CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee that a manageable way for FRV to provide specialist response training to the CFA was to increase the number of instructor positions seconded to the CFA.

The Heads of Agency Steering Committee has successfully overseen the other committees and subcommittees set up to work through reform-related issues. The relationships and processes that predicate this forum have guided this success.

Modern fire services

I have witnessed extensive organisational change during the reform period. The CFA was tasked with 'restoring' itself to a true volunteer organisation while also modernising to meet the demands of the Victorian community. FRV had the complicated undertaking of rebranding, expanding its operational area outside of metropolitan Melbourne and identifying as the organisational home for career firefighters.

The challenge to modernise through a series of intricate and interconnected actions, while continuing to deliver crucial protective and educational services, was immense. I have witnessed the agencies progress individual and joint actions designed to build complementary and interoperable fire services during the past 5 years.

¹⁰ K. Fitzgerald, personal communication, January 15, 2024

¹¹ K. Fitzgerald, personal communication, January 15, 2024

¹² K. Fitzgerald, personal communication, January 15, 2024

¹³ K. Fitzgerald, personal communication, January 15, 2024

The CFA's Operating Model, completed under action 1.7, was a significant piece of work. The framework of initiatives, which included a cultural review, diversity and inclusion strategy, people capability framework and cybersecurity plan, will assist the CFA to operate as an organisation that is responsive to change and better connected to the needs of its members and the community.

In particular, the CFA undertook a series of projects focused on enhancing and building the heart of its organisation – its volunteers. Actions 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 delivered on a whole-of-lifecycle support and capability for volunteers across the recruitment, engagement, training and support domains, and I am most pleased to see the CFA's efforts in building that direct bridge between volunteer feedback and input into its improvements.

I have witnessed FRV design and implement a robust health model for its employees under action 2.3. The breadth of services available to staff through this health service reflects a detailed understanding of the potential impacts of working in fire services. The health model also underscores FRV's appreciation that its people are its most important asset and that protecting their health from the beginning to the end of their employment with the organisation is an indication of FRV's strength as a fire service.

FRV showed further commitment to strengthening the organisation's reputation as a modern fire service through purposeful campaigns to increase diversity among its staff. I have been particularly impressed with the systems developed to track the progress of women at each recruitment stage. The valuable data that can be potentially gathered through this process will significantly enhance FRV's ability to drive cultural change and continue building its reputation as an organisation that will not tolerate inequity among staff.

I was also pleased to learn about FRV's successful connections built with regional and rural communities. The focus on 'at-risk' groups is particularly commendable.

Secondment model

The secondment model has obviously represented an especially challenging hallmark of FSR. While I have seen robust and protracted conversations between the CFA and FRV on how to approach the secondment of FRV employees to the CFA, it was gratifying to see both agencies reinforce their resolve to address the issue of secondees having a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC). The actions involving the CFA's organisational requirement for all staff to have a WWCC has brought out some of the most intense inter-agency discussions on implementation approach, and I am confident this commitment to work through challenging situations will continue beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Inter-agency collaboration

Actions involving the secondment model and other mechanisms central to interoperability and complementary fire services have relied on strong inter-agency collaboration. I have observed valuable collaboration between the CFA and FRV on matters including the setting up of governance arrangements, protocols and procedures that support operational and corporate staff working together. Despite the complex and sensitive content, I have clearly perceived this collaboration, making it an obvious key achievement of FSR to this point.

Challenges

FSR has been a challenging journey for all concerned. From the start of the work in 2020 when COVID-19 and the associated impacts were starting to unfold, the CFA and FRV embarked on immense operational, organisational and cultural change. While the process has been carefully monitored and adapted as needed, the agencies have implemented the reform in a setting where environmental conditions, the nature of emergencies and the broader agency conditions have constantly shifted. The resilience and capacity to respond to these challenges demonstrated by the CFA and FRV has been remarkable.

As well as the challenges presented by the broader context, key components of the reform have been particularly complex to work through. I have commented extensively on the secondment model and intersecting matters in previous reports and do so again here. While progress has been made on some of these issues during this reporting period, the process has been arduous and slow. I have witnessed some goodwill on behalf of the agencies to deliver outcomes in difficult circumstances. I believe there is a risk that this momentum, however slow it has been, will

struggle with the absence of another implementation plan and without changes to the consultation and decision-making environment.

Secondment model

A core achievement of FSR was the collaboration between the agencies to understand and dissect the secondment model, as it was defined in the Secondment Agreement.¹⁴ Implementing the model, however, has been a central challenge for all stakeholders. Considerable resources have been expended on working through its implementation, the actions that intersect and underpin the secondment model, and the alternative measures developed to manage issues caused in part by its design.

The CFA's requirement that all staff and volunteers, including FRV secondees, must hold a valid WWCC is one of the most sensitive and symbolic issues to stem from the secondment model. As noted in my 2023–24 annual report, the CFA must rely on FRV secondees to self-elect to get a WWCC and complete relevant training to comply with these standards. I took part in a meeting where the agencies acknowledged there continued to be privacy-related challenges in the sharing of personnel data to ascertain whether a FRV secondee held a WWCC.

In the absence of all FRV secondees holding a valid WWCC and the CFA having a mechanism to check and record this information, the potential for the secondment model to relieve the CFA's resourcing pressures is severely limited. This has been an issue from the beginning of the reform, and although this is a live issue with substantial resources dedicated by both agencies, it remains unresolved.

Vacancy and relief issues

I have been advised repeatedly by the CFA that its resourcing needs have not been met through the secondment model and that significant work is still required before this may happen.

The problem of filling vacancies and providing relief, including to cover long service and unplanned leave, at the commander and assistant chief fire officer levels in the CFA remains critical. While factors other than the design of the secondment model have contributed to this issue, particularly in peri-urban areas, the reform has not reduced the impact of workforce shortages on fire agencies.

As noted in my previous annual report, several mechanisms have been trialled to address this issue. Funding for more positions early in the reform period, increased reporting at the Heads of Agency Steering Committee and the CFA's Capability Statement in recent years, have all enabled some, but not enough, progress to occur. These mechanisms have not been able to overcome or significantly address the barriers, including an ageing workforce and the need for FRV to consult with the UFU and reach consensus via the Operational Consultative Committee to providing adequate staff to the CFA.

I have found it frustrating to observe how the structure of the secondment model has curtailed the CFA's involvement into how vacancy and relief issues are managed. Currently, the CFA has limited input in the recruitment, and skills set, of FRV staff seeking secondment into the CFA. And whilst the CFA has operational oversight of seconded staff through the CFA Chief Officer, there are complexities that limit the ability to allocate resources to where they are most needed.

The flow-on effects are concerning, particularly in relation to fatigue management and reduced wellbeing outcomes for those who cover these vacant or non-relieved positions, particularly in the country area of Victoria (CAoV),¹⁵ where they may have to travel long distances. The community ultimately also experiences these consequences, with a lack of senior decision-makers available on the ground for operational incidents.

¹⁴ Agencies confirmed the Secondment Agreement on 31 October 2020. This agreement establishes arrangements for seconding FRV assistant chief fire officers, commanders, instructors, practical area for drills (PAD) supervisors and PAD operators to the CFA to provide operational and volunteer support. Separately, supplementary instruments are being developed to establish arrangements related to leave, performance and misconduct management, relief and vacancy management.

¹⁵ The meaning of country area of Victoria is the same as defined in s 3(1) [Country Fire Authority Act 1958](#): 'country area of Victoria means that part of Victoria which lies outside the Fire Rescue Victoria fire district, but does not include any forest, national park or protected public land'.

A revolving door of relievers can also impact the resolution of CFA's volunteers' issues or concerns, with a lack of CFA command staff at middle management levels. Volunteers face the prospect of having their issues delayed, and there are potential long-term impacts on recruitment if membership with the CFA is known to involve unrelieved stress and burnout. Noting that volunteer numbers improved in 2025, the challenges presented by the secondment model in conjunction with an ageing workforce, could drastically reduce recruitment in the coming years.

I have repeatedly commented that the reforms have not been fully tested under widespread catastrophic fire conditions. The seasonal outlook for this fire season means we are more than likely to see the opportunity for such conditions to occur.

As we move into the summer fire season, the vacancy and relief issue poses a significant challenge for both agencies. A concerted effort to address this issue is needed to ensure operational capability is available to adequately cover the whole state.

Cultural change

FSR developed from a broad understanding of the need for change. I understand, however, that adopting new ways of working can be challenging at the best of times. Change is disruptive and can be messy. Learning new practices in a context where protecting lives and educating the community on fire safety are the core reasons for turning up to work is stressful. I have received considerable feedback from the agencies on the slow but gradual, and indeed successful, approaches taken to bring firefighters, volunteers and employees into the new ways of working. In some cases, this has involved transitioning from manual to digital processes.

The leadership provided by the CFA and FRV to encourage, support and deliver strong messaging to volunteer and career firefighters on the unassailable need for cultural change is commendable. This same leadership approach is clearly responsible for the structural changes embedded in the agencies to guide cultural change, including creating working environments where women are welcome as valued employees and members. I believe we have witnessed the early success of this impact through the slow increases in women firefighter applications.¹⁶ This has been exciting to observe, and I look forward to learning how this work continues.

Community support for, and trust in, the CFA and FRV partially depends on the agencies engaging firefighters, volunteers and employees who are representative of the people they protect. When communities recognise, connect and even identify with the people engaged in fire protection and education activity, the agencies are more likely to be listened to, engaged with and supported. The engagement with communities-at-risk and people who experience marginalisation is commendable.

Cultural change across the CFA and FRV will have several impacts, some of which may be unexpected. I hope to see a connection between the work undertaken to address outdated cultural structures and behaviours in the recruitment rates in both agencies. An obvious solution to the imminent loss of expertise and operational support through firefighter retirement is more recruitment from cohorts traditionally under-represented. As the CFA and FRV continue in their work to strengthen their organisational cultures and take active steps to be more inclusive, I have confidence this will strengthen their organisations and their ability to better serve the Victorian community.

Legislative barriers

I note that the particularly frustrating challenge to work with during the past 5 years has been the legislative barriers that have directly impeded the intent behind some reform actions. The CFA and FRV have admirably handled examples of where legislation has complicated service delivery to the community. I have witnessed this collaboration through establishing different Fire Services Operations Committee subcommittees to explore and resolve specific matters, and the resulting workarounds to ensure the community continued to receive fire safety and educational services.

¹⁶ ['FRV calls on more women to choose a career in fire and rescue services'](#), March 2021. Women made up 15.8% of the CFA volunteer cohort and 18.5% of the CFA's volunteer leadership roles were held by women as reported in the agency's quarter 4 reporting against its outcomes framework. FRV reported that the number of women operational staff in 2024–25 remained at 230 of 4,081 of employees (5.6%), in the data collected for quarter 4 of its Outcomes Framework.

An example of this collaboration involved dangerous goods and caravan parks and moveable dwellings. As part of the reform process, the CFA and FRV entered into a Service Level Deed of Agreement, stipulating that FRV would provide some dangerous goods and caravan parks services on behalf of the CFA in CAoV. However, legislative constraints mean the CFA cannot delegate certain powers to FRV employees to deliver these services. The agencies developed an arrangement where FRV provides administrative and ancillary support to the CFA to ensure the community isn't disadvantaged.

I am also aware that volunteers and career firefighters have continued to respond to incidents regardless of workarounds or delays in implementing the reform. Working to resolve legislative barriers has been labour-intensive for the agencies, but the community has been prioritised.

Industrial relations

In my previous reports, I have referred to – in detail – the impact of FRV's industrial environment on implementing and progressing actions under the reform. This influence has also contributed to the need for the agencies to collaborate and develop alternative measures to achieve outcomes under the reform. I have observed the CFA and FRV working to find common ground and deliver, as much as possible, a well-intended but imperfect reform.

I noted in my 2023–24 annual report that the UFU's 'consult and agree' requirement was a key impediment to completing actions under the implementation plan. I will not revisit my comments from this report except to say that despite some ongoing challenges I have seen an improvement in this area over the past 12 months.

I acknowledge FRV's efforts to manage the demands of the reform and those of their industrial partners and encourage FRV to continue doing so.

The effort and resources expended to review and update actions according to what it was hoped would be achievable in light of FRV's industrial environment is considerable. I have monitored extensive work conducted by DJCS and the agencies to come up with solutions that allow action deliverables to be completed within the parameters of this context. I respect the 'consult and agree' clause and appreciate the views of the UFU are necessary and important to consider. The process through consultative committee over the past 12 months has been constructive, and we hope this momentum can continue.

Looking forward

The government's Year 2–5 Implementation Plan concluded on 30 June 2025. I believe this plan has contributed to creating modern fire services through the relationships cemented and actions completed that have led to tangible changes.

However, reform is long term and ongoing. The government set a 10-year timeframe on the reform, and we have only just passed the halfway mark of that period. The challenges discussed throughout this report remain, and without the guidance of a succeeding implementation plan, the risk that momentum and focus will regress is real.

It is crucial to remember that the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan doesn't mean true interoperability and complementary fire services has been completely achieved. In fact, the plan has ended without long-term and sustainable solutions for many of the issues that I have identified across my 5 annual reports. The end of the plan does not give 'a clean bill of health' for FSR. Workarounds are still in place and are far from efficient or suitable for the long term. In the absence of changes to legislation or the industrial environment, these issues will remain and will require ongoing attention and monitoring.

I encourage the CFA and FRV to continue referring to the agreed definition of complementary fire services and the principles that underpin this statement in future work.

I hope they draw on the guidance and feedback from the governance arrangements and install periodic reviews of their effectiveness to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

I encourage the CFA and FRV to reinforce the mechanisms in place to gather the opinions of volunteers and career firefighters and of the communities they serve. Developing responsive and trusted fire services was a desired

outcome of FSR, and while significant progress has been achieved, momentum cannot be lost if this is still to be realised.

I have reflected on the systems, tools, procedures and agreements the CFA and FRV have established and refined as part of FSR. I am confident the level of consultation, thought and deliberation that underlie these practices is sufficiently extensive that the reform is leaving the agencies with a solid foundation to build on.

I have witnessed strong examples of where the agencies have worked together to protect the community on an organisational and operational level. The possibility that actions that have been partially completed and transitioned to business as usual will be subsumed by priorities other than community safety is not acceptable. While this is an extreme and unlikely scenario, I advise the agencies to manage the creep of other concerns, keep setting targets and adhering to plans to complete the actions so the intent of the implementation plan is realised.

So much has been accomplished over the past 5 years. Benefits are starting to be realised, if not already, and the foundations are in place for many more to come. I would like to congratulate the CFA and FRV for their commitment to FSR and the perseverance shown when it was really needed.

The CFA and FRV face new and emerging challenges. Several of these have been brewing for some time and are starting to become more acute. The broader societal issues of an ageing workforce and declining population growth, in conjunction with more people moving to live in regional Victoria, creates operational and organisational challenges for the agencies.¹⁷ Climate change increases the pressure on fire services to work differently with shorter preparation periods and longer emergency response times.

The CFA and FRV, along with other fire service agencies, work at the intersection of environmental and societal change and must constantly review, adjust and trial new ways of working and delivering fire services. The efforts to embed robust data collection and evaluation methods will continue to better position the CFA and FRV to respond to challenges already in focus and those yet to appear. These practices, in addition to the care taken to guide firefighters, volunteers and employees through immense change, will ensure fire agency workforces remain safe and able to protect the community while also constantly adapting to unexpected events.

I encourage the CFA and FRV to draw on the relationships, governance structures and agreed ways of working to face these challenges. The intentional collaboration in a context that was quite often tense and always involved competing priorities is one of the most successful outcomes of the reform. The CFA and FRV should recall this collaboration and continue to rely on the connections built during the past 5 years to meet future challenges for fire services.

Although this is my last annual report against the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, the legislated role of the FSIM will remain for another 5 years and will continue to conduct the functions below:

- monitor and assess ongoing efforts to improve the interaction between the CFA and FRV and other agencies
- provide independent and impartial monitoring of unresolved FSR issues
- remain available to meet with career firefighters and volunteers to listen to their concerns and experiences that are a result of FSR
- monitor all the implementation plan actions that have been moved to business as usual, especially the partially completed actions from the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan
- consult and engage with agencies in the performance of the FSIM's functions
- prepare quarterly and annual reports on the findings of the FSIM on performing its functions.

¹⁷ The Productivity Commission's [2023 Report on Government Services](#). Emergency Management noted that Victoria had the highest attrition rate of firefighters nationally, at 7.8%. NSW's attrition rate was 7.1%, NT and Qld were 5.9%, WA was 4.9%, Tasmania 4.4% and ACT 3.3%. The Victorian calculations included FRV, the CFA, Forest Fire Management Victoria and Victoria State Emergency Services. Refer also to Daniel Miles '[More people considering a regional move as experts warn about infrastructure needs](#)', ABC News 21 November 2024.

I look forward to observing the agencies building on the strong foundations of FSR and remain committed to working with the CFA and FRV to progress this important work for the benefit of the Victorian community.



The Hon. Niall Blair

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

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Introduction

Overview

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor (FSIM) Annual Report 2024–25 delivers on our functions under s 131(1) of the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958*.

This annual report provides our independent observations and analysis of progress made by the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and the Firefighters Registration Board (FRB) in implementing the Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan (Year 2–5 Implementation Plan) actions.

This annual report looks at the delivery of the residual Year 2–5 Implementation Plan actions for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. June 2025 marked the end of the fifth and closing year of the plan. This annual report therefore also considers the final outcomes from the agencies in their efforts to realise the visions of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Fire services reform

The Victorian Government's 2017 Fire Services Statement¹⁸ outlined the government's vision for a modern, sustainable and interoperable fire service that will keep Victorians safe. It also offered a roadmap for how it could be achieved.

On 1 July 2020 the government began implementing Victoria's new fire services model by establishing FRV as a career firefighting organisation and restoring the CFA to a community-based, volunteer firefighting organisation.

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan mapped how agencies will work individually and jointly to achieve the government's 10-year vision for reform. The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan concluded on 30 June 2025.

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

The FSIM was established as an independent entity in July 2020 under s 122 of the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act* to provide assurance to government and the community on progress towards a modern fire service for a safer Victoria.

The Hon. Niall Blair was appointed as Victoria's inaugural FSIM in December 2020 and was reappointed for a further term from 15 December 2023 until 30 June 2027.

Under the Act, we have the legislative responsibility to monitor and report on agencies' progress to deliver relevant actions in the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan and to assess the effectiveness of the agencies' actions.

Section 142 of the Act requires us to prepare annual reports that are tabled in Parliament on our operations each financial year. The 2024–25 annual report is our final one against the concluded Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Measuring success at year 5

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, it is only fitting to circle back to the success statements delineated by government under the plan.¹⁹ These following sections of the report will discuss each of the priority areas and the progress of work conducted by the agencies in acquitting the actions, and how this progression contributes to meeting the success statements.

¹⁸ Refer to the [Fire Services Reform](#) website.

¹⁹ DJCS updated the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan following a review completed in July 2024.

We do note that the acquittal of each action's deliverables, for the most part, helps establish a strong foundation to fulfil those success statements in the longer term. Benefits realisation and the impacts of these changes, however, require analysis over a period far beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Note that, for consistency, we use the terms 'completed' or 'partially completed' in our assessment of all actions. This is slightly different from the assessment schema in prior annual reports, where 3 categories were used: implemented, partially implemented or closed. Refer to the Appendix for more information on our assessment status definitions for this report.²⁰

In this annual report, we report on:

- work completed by the CFA, FRV, DJCS and the FRB from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 to deliver against the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan
- post-acquittal work undertaken in the year 5 reporting period that significantly contributes to the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan. Noting this is the final year of reporting against the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, commentary has also been made on progress beyond 30 June 2025, showing continual progress where important.

Our assessment of agencies' progress in delivering relevant actions was informed by:

- meetings with key stakeholders – CFA, FRV, DJCS, Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner and chief executive, the United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch (UFU) and Volunteers Fire Brigades Victoria
- observations made in governance meetings, including at fortnightly CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee (HoA) meetings and monthly Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee (FSRSEC) meetings
- reviews and follow-up queries of information and evidence provided by agencies informing status and/or progress against an implementation action, which may include those provided after 30 June 2025 before publication of this report.

We have triangulated evidence from these sources to develop an understanding of agencies' delivery against relevant actions and to ensure our conclusive assessment is based on reliable information.

²⁰ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 51.

Priority One: Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighting organisation

What success looks like at year 5

Success statement

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan defined success at year 5 for Priority One as:

CFA has the capability and capacity to deliver consistent high-quality services to the Victorian community through a contemporary operating model. The professional services delivered by CFA across the spectrum of prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery are of the highest standards and informed by contemporary research and best practice. The professional skills of our firefighters and their connections with the communities they serve will strengthen our volunteer-based emergency service into the future.

What this means for the CFA

Delivering on this priority area will result in the CFA having a sustainable and appropriately skilled volunteer workforce supported by contemporary tools, equipment and technologies that has both the capability and capacity to be a world-leading, innovative volunteer-based emergency service.

Actions under this priority

Priority One had 7 implementation actions for the CFA to acquit.

The actions below were developed to operationalise and embed practices and outcomes that ensure the CFA remains a strong, proud, flexible and sustainable volunteer-based organisation.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
1.1 Develop CFA's Engagement Framework.	CFA	Completed 2024 ²¹
1.2 Complete delivery of the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program.	CFA	Completed 2023 ²²
1.3 Deliver the Volunteer Support Package.	CFA	Completed 2025 ²³
1.4 Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses.	CFA	Completed 2025 ²⁴

²¹ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 39.

²² FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 29.

²³ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 52.

²⁴ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 54.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
1.5 Complete delivery of the Connected Brigades Project (part of \$3.6 million program to enhance critical volunteer facing ICT systems).	CFA	Completed 2023 ²⁵
1.6 Review and update training as part of the develop Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers project.	CFA	Completed 2025 ²⁶
1.7 Review CFA's operating model and develop a roadmap to create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation.	CFA	Completed 2024 ²⁷

Findings and considerations

Measuring against the success statement

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, we note that all required implementation actions were acquitted and consider the CFA has made a positive contribution to the objective delineated in the success statement, with the foundational supports required for long-term success in place.

The Priority One actions focus on the heart and strength of the CFA – its volunteers. The actions aimed to support volunteers to continue serving the community with the backing of the highest standard of equipment, support and training.

Overall, the completed actions have set a successful foundation for the CFA to continue building on the capability of its volunteer brigades to serve their communities and respond across a range of emergencies throughout the country area of Victoria (CAoV).

We highly commend the CFA on its significant work to improve its volunteer lifecycle and encourage the CFA to continue listening to, and acting on, the voice of its volunteers in improving on the successes it has achieved under the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Stakeholder engagement

Action 1.1 was designed to reinvigorate the strategy and approach to engagement across the various stakeholders that the CFA interacted with, including its staff, volunteers and the communities it services.

The CFA Engagement Framework comprised a series of plans and approaches that guided the implementation of its mission, vision and organisational strategy. The framework was based on the Victorian Government's Public Engagement Framework 2021–2025²⁸ and included principles for best practice engagement tailored for the complexity and impact of projects on volunteers. The volunteer engagement checklist and matrix for assessing the impact on volunteers stood out as particularly useful tools to guide project leaders when determining the level and type of engagement required. We understand the overall effectiveness of the framework will continue to be monitored through the CFA Executive Committee.

²⁵ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 33.

²⁶ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 55.

²⁷ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 45.

²⁸ Refer to the [Victorian Government's Public Engagement Framework 2021–2025](#).

Since acquittal, the CFA has seen increases across a range of stakeholder engagement indicators measured through quarterly and annual reporting against its Outcomes Framework. In particular, we note the positive trend across the following indicators:

- 1.2.1 Increase in the number of community members engaging with CFA (quarterly)
- 3.4.32 Increase in staff engagement – All Staff Briefing survey (quarterly)
- 1.2.2 Increase in direct engagement of community members engaging with CFA from locations and households at higher risk (annual)
- 3.4.31 Increase in staff engagement (annual).²⁹

At year 5, we highly commend the CFA on the broad positive growth across all its engagement activities and encourage the CFA to continue building on these achievements to establish stronger trust and confidence within its staff and volunteer workforce and the communities it serves.

Volunteer lifecycle

Actions 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 were designed to develop and enhance the volunteer lifecycle across engagement, recruitment, training and support.

Volunteer support

Improvements to the quality of support over the volunteer lifecycle were the objectives of actions 1.2 and 1.3. These actions involved multiple projects that collectively enabled:

- improved recruitment and volunteer transfers between CFA brigades
- volunteer access to information
- information sharing between volunteers and guidance for volunteers' families
- insights into brigade capability
- networking opportunities
- a culture of connectedness through branded workwear.

Since acquitting the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program (action 1.2), the CFA has advised that significant improvements to the Volunteer Recruitment Hub, as informed by end-user feedback, were implemented in May 2025, and we understand that, to date, the CFA has effectively managed more than 22,000 applications from prospective members.

Action 1.3 required the CFA to deliver the Volunteer Support Package, which had 6 deliverables.³⁰

The acquittal report provided to us noted the CFA Pocketbook application, workwear project and Volunteer Recruitment Hub were completed, with the hub release 4 made live in October 2024. The Brigade Capability Review led to the Baseline Capability Profiling Application,³¹ which has been live since April 2023.³² The application transitioned to business as usual (BAU) during the 2022–23 reporting period, and we understand that the first phase of Digital Store is available to all volunteers.

²⁹ CFA, Q4 Outcomes Framework – Annual Report 24–25, p. 1.

³⁰ Action 1.3 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

³¹ [The FSIM's Year 3 Annual Report](#) noted the application enables the CFA to assess brigade capability gaps and to provide information on demographics, land-use and community characteristics.

³² Year 2–5 Implementation Plan. Progress Summary – Quarter 1, 2024–25 (at 30 September 2024).

Since acquittal, we have been informed that an external review of volunteer recruitment and onboarding has been commissioned, with the intent to inform enhancements for the Volunteer Recruitment Hub and strengthen the volunteer experience across those phases of the volunteer lifecycle. This review is expected to be completed by the end of 2025. Also, the supply of workwear for volunteers has been transitioned to BAU and the Digital Stores will continue to be upgraded over time.

Volunteer training

Improvements to volunteer competency and capability were delivered through the revising the crew and strike team leaders training courses (action 1.4)³³ and the Enhanced Training Capacity for New Volunteers project (action 1.6).³⁴

The crew leader and strike team leader training courses were amended to ensure they were fit for purpose. The course equips emergency response teams and leaders from response agencies with the skills needed to respond to high-stress situations and effectively manage teams in complex settings.

The acquittal report and subsequent information provided to us noted the completion of the new strike team leader course in November 2024 and the new crew leader course in January 2025. The CFA also advised that course delivery would transition to BAU at the regional level and that the courses would be reviewed as part of the CFA's scheduled review program.

As at 30 June 2025, the CFA advised that 395 crew leaders and 59 strike team leaders had completed the training.

The Enhanced Training Capacity for New Volunteers project delivered the refreshed General Firefighters (GFF) course, which is the training provided to new members to enable safe participation at turnouts under supervision.

The acquittal report advised that the updated GFF version 2 course began being delivered in October 2024 and has since transitioned to BAU. The GFF version 2 course incorporated digital assessments and online modules to enable greater flexibility and accessibility for members and will be the subject of ongoing periodic review.

The CFA also advised that the GFF version 1 course continued to be delivered until March 2025, ensuring continuity for members who started that version and that issuing personal protective clothing (PPC) for those who completed the GFF course will be managed as part of BAU at the district and state levels.

As at 30 June 2025, the CFA advised that 1,262 members completed the GFF course over 2024–25.

Volunteer feedback

Across all these improvements to the volunteer lifecycle, the CFA gave examples of how volunteer feedback has informed and contributed to improvements across its initiatives and projects.

Such feedback included functional limitations of the Volunteer Recruitment Hub during early iterations that challenged the user experience. We were advised the hub is now received positively by administrative staff, new volunteers and brigade management team members following the CFA's action on the feedback. The CFA acknowledges there is ongoing work needed to improve the functionality of the hub.

Other examples included wearer trials of PPC and safety boots and the design of the junior brigade website. Important insights were also gathered from volunteers on the CFA's ultra heavy tanker capability that was deployed in a strike team configuration in major bushfires in western Victoria in late 2024. This has since informed operational effectiveness.

The CFA also advised us that all volunteers engaged in CFA training are invited to provide feedback on the quality of the course, which is used to inform course design. We acknowledge that while feedback may not yet be available for the revised crew and strike team leader courses, the following observations from the GFF course will likely apply.

³³ Action 1.4 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

³⁴ [Action 1.5 deliverables as listed in Monitoring progress of actions, FSIM, Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 33.

We received a copy of the review conducted on the GFF in 2023–24 and saw that it included data from those members who either cancelled their enrolment or did not progress through the course for at least 12 months. We encourage the CFA to continue actively engaging with those who do not complete their training on time to identify and address potential barriers to completing training.

The CFA has highlighted overwhelmingly positive feedback received on its GFF version 2 course – in particular, the flexible delivery approach that enabled theory to be undertaken at the user's own pace with practical training tailored to brigade schedules, as well as the engagement of local brigades in supporting new recruits with locally delivered training.

At year 5, we highly commend the CFA on its work to enhance support for volunteers across the lifecycle. In particular, the information provided by the CFA on how it elicits volunteer feedback and uses this to make improvements to initiatives and systems shows the CFA's capacity to operate as an organisation that is built on the real-life experience and voice of its volunteers.

Brigade information and communications technology

Action 1.5 was designed to improve critical volunteer-facing ICT systems across the CFA to support online training and improve communications between brigades, regions, districts and headquarters.

Under this action, the CFA committed to deliver its Connected Brigades Project, which provided secure and standard internet services across the CFA's brigades. We note that all the CFA's brigades were invited to be involved in the Connected Brigades Project but that not all opted to do so.³⁵

As reported in our 2022–23 annual report, of the 1,211 CFA brigades, 1,038 opted to be involved and received connectivity in 2022. After further consultation by the CFA with the remaining 173 brigades, a second tranche of 115 brigades subsequently opted in and 110 were connected. The acquittal report (June 2023) noted that internet connectivity will transition to BAU and be serviced through the provider contract and that further work will involve reviewing the viability of satellite connection for the 5 remaining brigade sites.

The CFA also reported that the 58 brigades that did not opt in to the program indicated that they would either not use internet services, were not connected to power or had insufficient network access in the CAoV.³⁶ The CFA advised us that the National Broadband Network (NBN) Fixed Wireless network upgrade is assisting it to upgrade 224 sites over the next 8 months, from 4G to Fixed Wireless, which enables faster download speeds, including during busy periods. There are currently 7 stations that have not sought to be connected, but the CFA continues to install services at fire stations and satellite stations when requested.

We note the completion of this action enabled member access to a range of online tool and services, including:

- Members Online
- Learning Management System
- Volunteer Recruitment Hub
- Fire Incident Reporting System (FIRS) to report incident turnouts
- CFA Microsoft 365 including CFA email.³⁷

Since acquittal, we were advised that the remaining 5 brigades (which increased to 6) that opted in for the second tranche were provided with 4G services as a result of Telstra's coverage expansion. Unfortunately, the 4G service has only been effective for 50% of this cohort, so the CFA will connect the remaining sites to the NBN Sky Muster.

³⁵ Country Fire Authority '[Brigades get connected as project rollout begins](#)', 17 July 2019. Accessed 1 September 2025.

³⁶ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 33.

³⁷ Country Fire Authority [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 28.

We commend the CFA on its implementation of the ICT improvements across most of its brigades and understand that ICT improvements have allowed members to perform their roles through modern ways of working, including considering prospective members through the Volunteer Recruitment Hub, submissions of incident reports through the FIRS, and accessing policy, doctrine and other operational information (such as wellbeing services).

We understand the government is delivering the Connecting Victoria program and fast-tracking telecommunications infrastructure to improve internet connectivity across regional Victoria, which may alleviate network access in the CAoV. Notwithstanding, we encourage the CFA to continue exploring avenues, including satellite options, to enable modern ways of working across all its brigades so all their members have access to the same level of support through centralised systems and platforms.

Operating model

Action 1.7 was designed to support the CFA in being a more contemporary and sustainable organisation through a review of its operating model and the development of a roadmap of 29 initiatives for implementation over the coming 5 to 6 years.

We also note that this action has important cross-intersections with other actions in the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, including:

- Action 4.7 – Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models
- Action 5.2 – DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state service delivery capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks
- Action 5.4 – Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services
- Action 5.7 – Capture the operational costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria based on 3 years of financial reporting
- Action 5.8 – CFA and FRV to ensure internal budgets consider the funding estimates over the forward years provided by the Victorian Government

The acquittal report for this action noted the Operating Model Program, which was endorsed by the CFA Board in March 2023, would be overseen by the CFA Executive, with an annual review to determine initiative prioritisation and funding for each year. It also reported that 10 initiatives were endorsed by the CFA Executive to be progressed in 2023–24 and that they were on track as at 30 June 2024.

The CFA advised us that since acquittal many of the 10 initiatives have since been completed. The CFA is currently considering the next phase of work.

At year 5, we commend the CFA on its progress in delivering initiatives from its Operating Model Program, which was a significant undertaking and involved extensive work at a time of organisational upheaval. The broad scope of plans to restore the CFA to a proud volunteer firefighting agency has already assisted the CFA to meet this goal and we are confident that further work under the Operating Model Program will consolidate and build on these changes.

Priority Two: Strengthen FRV as a career firefighting agency

What success looks like at year 5

Success statement

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan defined success at year 5 for Priority Two as:

FRV is trusted and respected by the community and sector partners and builds sustainable service delivery and capability which is informed by research and data. FRV is ready for all emergencies, including large and complex incidents, for specialist rescue, and for times of surge demand.

What this means for FRV

The community can rely on highly skilled firefighters using modern, well-maintained equipment and world's-best incident management practice. FRV thrives on a continuous improvement culture, ensures transparent and accountable decision-making, and is informed by the latest evidence and research to enhance service delivery to protect our community and firefighters. FRV engages with multicultural communities and local governments to ensure they understand local risk and contribute to effective community outcomes and safety strategies.

Actions under this priority

Priority Two had 4 implementation actions for FRV to acquit.

The actions below were developed to operationalise and embed practices and outcomes that would support the strengthening of FRV as a career firefighting agency.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
2.1 Commence Phase Two of the operational communications rollout, including upgrades to station turn out (STO) equipment in FRV stations.	FRV	Partially completed 2023 ³⁸ Completed 2025 ³⁹
2.2 Explore the operational and service delivery benefits of accreditation for FRV within the Victorian emergency management response model and provide options to government on the accreditation process.	FRV	Completed 2023 ⁴⁰

³⁸ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 37.

³⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 23.

⁴⁰ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 38.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
2.3 Develop and implement a contemporary health model, which establishes statewide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms that are designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to our firefighters and corporate staff.	FRV	Completed 2024 ⁴¹
2.4 Merge required legacy enterprise agreements and commence negotiations on new agreements.	FRV	Completed 2024 ⁴²

Findings and considerations

Measuring against the success statement

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, we note that all required actions were acquitted and consider that the work of FRV has contributed towards the delineated success statement, with the foundational supports required for long-term success in place.

The Priority Two actions empower FRV to build its capability and capacity as the primary responder to fire and other emergencies across its operational footprint.

Overall, the completed actions have provided further foundations for FRV to embed data-driven and forward-looking expectations while strengthening its career workforce to deliver high-quality service and response across a range of emergencies throughout Victoria.

We highly commend FRV on its work to identify and understand the needs of the various communities it serves and the investment in its people through modern systems that enable its firefighters to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible, as well as support mechanisms that advance workforce wellbeing.

We acknowledge that there is still work to do as part of BAU and encourage FRV to continue on its journey towards the success statement beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Communications capabilities

Action 2.1 was designed to harmonise operational communications across all FRV stations.

FRV was required to begin a series of upgrades to harmonise operational communications across all FRV stations, including the 37 former CFA integrated stations that transferred to FRV. This action was Phase Two of FRV's broader Communications Program, and the deliverables included implementing network connections across stations to allow IT equipment to be installed, STO enhancements and new 5G and Wi-Fi solutions for fire stations and public events that FRV supports.

The intent of the action was to ensure consistency across the FRV operational communications support systems in all stations. This would help ensure communities received the same high-quality response to fire-related incidents, regardless of location, and FRV firefighters could rely on the communications systems required to perform their jobs were consistent, familiar, available and functioning at every station. This action was part of the effort to ensure the same communications systems were used across all stations when fire services reform (FSR) was introduced.

⁴¹ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 46.

⁴² FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 48.

Although the core deliverables, including software application enhancements and rollout of STO to regional stations had been implemented, we assessed action 2.1 as partially completed in 2023. This was on the grounds that the optical fibre communication links, although started, had not yet been rolled out to all stations and were scheduled to do so, as reported at that time, over the next 2 years.⁴³

Upon review in 2025, noting the action required was for FRV to begin these works under Phase Two with completion from Phase Three onwards, they have advised that the implementation of optical fibre links is in full progress with only 6 stations remaining, and we have reassessed action 2.1 as completed.

We understand that the successful operational communications rollout to the 27 FRV stations under Phase Two has enabled the implementation of reliable, resilient, high-speed network links that operate the STO system, enhancing the way key information (for example, incident routing directions and options, hydrant mapping, water-main sizing and low-bridge indications) is provided to operational staff.

FRV has also been rolling out a new station-based system for keys, alarms and turnout information as part of Phase Two, enabling enhanced response to incidents and the community via pre-plans and specific site information containing hazardous materials and dangerous goods at known sites.

The operational communications rollout and upgrades to STO equipment in FRV stations is crucial to ensuring all FRV firefighters across the state have access to equipment and information they need to perform their job and keep Victorians safe, protected and informed about fire dangers.

We recognise that while FRV has progressed to Phase Three of its Communications Program, there are still key works carried over from Phase Two that are yet to be completed. Notwithstanding, we understand the outstanding implementation of optical fibre links for the 6 remaining stations have not diminished or prevented FRV from its required standard of service delivery across those areas.

We acknowledge that communications and station equipment require constant upgrades and maintenance and encourage FRV to continue progressing the phases of its Communications Program. FRV should also continually assess and prioritise enhancements to systems – in particular, those servicing high fire-risk areas where there are fewer alternative resources to draw on during incidents.

Community risk-based service delivery

Action 2.2 was designed to explore mechanisms to align FRV's service delivery with community expectations.

FRV was required to explore the benefits to operational and service delivery of accreditation with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and provide an options paper on accreditation models to inform service delivery planning and continuous improvement to government for consideration.

CFAI accreditation is specific to fire and emergency service agencies and is available globally. However, it has predominately been undertaken in North America, with only a few fire agencies accredited from Europe and the Middle East.

We understand the intent of CFAI accreditation is to establish a good practice and continuous improvement model to enhance agency effectiveness, achieved through definition risk, documenting response arrangements, measuring performance (including benchmarks) and planning for continuous improvement.

Australia has no equivalent accreditation program, nor has any of the country's fire agencies achieved CFAI accreditation. And while FRV decided not to pursue accreditation formally at the time of action acquittal, it did adopt the CFAI accreditation framework to guide its implementation of service delivery planning and continuous quality improvement processes.

⁴³ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 37.

Even in the absence of formal accreditation, we consider that the core fundamentals of CFAI accreditation as applicable and valuable in guiding their continuous improvement efforts. FRV has used the CFAI model in its operational and service delivery – in particular, the approach to tailoring services to the specific needs of different communities. This is commendable, and we are pleased that FRV has established governance to oversee implementation of embedding service planning and continuous quality improvement approaches throughout the organisation.

Since acquittal, FRV has seen a year-on-year increase of participants in community education programs such as Fire Ed for Foundation, Seniors Fire Safety Program, Fit to Drive and Fire-CAP, from 11,283 participants in 2022–23 to 31,284 participants in 2023–24.⁴⁴

Similarly, we also note the positive quarter versus quarter trend between 2023–24 and 2024–25 as reported by FRV against indicators *1.3.1 Increase in understand of risk of fire and other hazards* and *1.3.2 Increase in local preparedness and mitigation activities related to fire and natural hazards* of its Outcomes Framework.⁴⁵

FRV has since advised that the framework and approach to service planning and continuous improvement has informed many pieces of work, such as the development of a community risk assessment methodology, which considers vulnerability, hazard and exposure risk drivers.

We were advised that community risk assessments have been completed for urban fire suppression, emergency medical response and other capabilities such as aerial risk.

Other improvements and initiatives across community engagement programs are underway, including the:

- internal audit of FRV's community resilience framework, which has led to incorporating data gathered through the FRV & CFA Community Engagement Working Group, schools and firefighters that deliver these programs
- Home Fire Safety Tool, which enables people to self-assess the extent to which their home is fire safe – this tool includes an option to request a visit from FRV to ask specific questions
- multicultural fire safety resource development – this was a joint-agency collaboration that led to creating animations that communicated home fire safety messages in 12 community languages.

We note the positive growth in community engagement with FRV programs, as well as the continuous improvement approach FRV has taken in further developing community risk assessments and its suite of community engagement programs. We highly commend FRV on its strong commitment to building fire safety resilience within the community through engagement and education programs that target at-risk and multicultural groups.

We encourage FRV to keep building on these achievements and continue embedding its ongoing improvement approach to establish stronger and wider community links to deliver a contemporary and fit-for-purpose service that can address the risks of the different communities it serves.

Workforce support

Actions 2.3 and 2.4 were designed to support and value FRV's workforce through establishing appropriate industrial working conditions and support mechanisms.

Workforce health

Action 2.3 required FRV to develop and implement a contemporary health model that establishes statewide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks while improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to its firefighters and corporate staff.

⁴⁴ Fire Rescue Victoria, Annual Report 2023–24, p. 48.

⁴⁵ Fire Rescue Victoria, Outcomes Framework Progress Report Q3 FY 2024/25, p. 4.

FRV was required to design this health model through extensive stakeholder consultation to oversee a medical services procurement tender process and to execute the contract while also implementing key internal components of the model. FRV engaged Cogent Thinking to deliver health services to its employees.⁴⁶

The health model acknowledges the complex and hazardous nature of the work undertaken by many FRV staff, and while the actual benefits of action 2.3 are difficult to assess without qualitative data collected from FRV staff on the extent to which improvements in their physical and psychological health could be attributed to it, FRV's Outcomes Framework does report against indicator *3.1.1 Increase in support and maintenance of firefighters' physical and psychological health*. This indicator looks at time lost to injuries (one or more working days/shifts lost) and the number of injuries and near misses (both measures are calculated per 1,000 fulltime-equivalent staff).

We understand from FRV that available data continues to support the rationale for implementing a dedicated health model, and work is underway to develop more rigorous and meaningful measures of effectiveness to ensure the model delivers tangible and sustainable outcomes.

Since acquittal, FRV has also advised of having implemented a range of mechanisms to ensure the consistent capture, review and action of feedback on its health model, and that such systems have directly contributed to increased engagement and uptake of health, safety and wellbeing services across the state.

Such mechanisms include district-level feedback and local response through embedded teams of injury, prevention and rehabilitation specialists, psychological services, safety advisors and return-to-work coordinators. We were advised that FRV also has an online feedback form available, employees are invited to complete participant surveys following an appointment and that Cogent Thinking can be contacted directly. FRV also has regular meetings with Cogent Thinking to review feedback and address systemic improvements.

Looking ahead, FRV is establishing a clinical governance committee, a function of which will be to discuss feedback, analyse emerging themes and drive continuous improvement across the health model.

Working conditions

Action 2.4 required FRV to ensure the appropriate steps are taken to harmonise enterprise agreements (EAs) by merging legacy EAs and starting negotiations on new EAs.

Enshrining the arrangements and work conditions of both FRV's firefighting and non-firefighting workforce would provide clarity, certainty, fairness and predictability on workplace expectations. Safety and respect in the workplace would be underpinned by terms and conditions that are stable and agreed to.

However, we also understand and recognise that FRV's industrial environment creates a complex context for negotiating EAs and that the actions of other entities are not under FRV's control, potentially affecting timelines.

From formation, FRV and the UFU had harmonised the Operational Consultative Committees for the 2 divisions (Division A and Division B) to streamline the process and reduce administrative burden. However, in September 2024, the UFU reverted to the previous model of 2 separate Operational Consultative Committees. Because this was consistent with the terms of the operational EA, FRV agreed, having no ability to oppose the change.

In addressing uncertainty within the workforce, FRV has informed us of the steps its Executive Leadership, Workplace Relations and Strategic Communications teams have taken to ensure clear, regular and transparent communications to staff on bargaining updates. There is also the comprehensive range of wellbeing services, including the health model, available and promoted throughout the organisation.

Since acquittal, FRV has advised us that negotiations are continuing across the 3 EAs.

⁴⁶ Refer to [Cogent Thinking – Workplace Injury and Claims Solutions](#).

At year 5, we highly commend FRV on the work it has done in successfully establishing its health model – in particular, its reach and the commitment shown to engaging in a cycle of continuous improvement. It is crucial that all FRV employees feel they are equally valued and that their safety is respected. While health supports may theoretically be available to all FRV employees, the awareness and knowledge of how to access, use and benefit from these services is where the intent behind this action will be realised.

We also encourage FRV to continue working towards settling its EAs, as well as its approach in providing timely and transparent updates and available supports to its workforce during this prolonged period of uncertainty.

The wellbeing of FRV's operational and corporate staff directly influences its ability to deliver high-quality and sustainable services to the community. We consider the barometers of how FRV is progressing against the success statement to be from the perspective of both its workforce and the communities it services. Specifically, this would be via quantitative and qualitative data from workforce surveys such as the Victorian Public Sector Commission's People Matter Survey and other targeted evaluation mechanisms.

Priority Three: Plan and build for the future

What success looks like at year 5

Success statement

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan defined success at year 5 for Priority Three as:

Strategic frameworks support the fire agencies to understand and assess fire risk and opportunities into the future, building capability which enables them to effectively deliver integrated and interoperable services to the community. The agencies will deliver effective integrated services across the emergency management continuum that achieve quality public safety outcomes.

	The CFA	FRV
What this means for	The CFA provides leadership to the emergency management sector and has the necessary capabilities to provide the best community outcomes. As an outcome of this work, the CFA will have the right capabilities, infrastructure, tools and equipment to meet the needs of Victorian communities today and to combat the risks they will face into the future.	FRV plans for the future through identifying risks and opportunities and embedding these in strategic planning frameworks. Workforce planning ensures that a skilled workforce with experienced leadership is available now and into the future. Asset and equipment lifecycle planning ensures high maintenance standards and replacement schedules that deliver modern and fit-for-purpose stations, appliances and equipment. FRV works seamlessly with our partners during an emergency response and has a strong interoperability capability, particularly with the CFA.

Actions under this priority

Priority Three had 12 actions to be acquitted through individual or joint agency efforts.

The actions below were developed to operationalise and embed practices and outcomes that would support planning and building for the future of the fire services.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
3.1 Ensure FRV's information and communications technology (ICT) is consistent across all stations to support service delivery.	FRV	Completed 2024 ⁴⁷
3.2 Deliver the fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.	CFA	Completed 2025 ⁴⁸
3.3 Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV.	CFA	Partially completed 2025 ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 50.

⁴⁸ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 56.

⁴⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 57.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
3.4 FRV, in consultation with CFA, identify capital works required across designated stations at the time of the reform and develop a framework (tenancy agreement) to support delivery of agreed projects.	FRV	Completed 2024 ⁵⁰
3.5 CFA to complete delivery of agreed capital works projects on behalf of FRV.	CFA	Partially completed 2023 ⁵¹ Completed 2025 ⁵²
3.6 Rollout of the FRV personal protective clothing (PPC) ensembles as part of the PPC project.	FRV	Completed 2024 ⁵³
3.7 Agencies mature existing joint governance arrangements that support the implementation of the program and ongoing development of interoperability procedures and arrangements.	CFA and FRV	Partially completed 2023 ⁵⁴
3.8 CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's registered training organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements.	CFA and FRV	Partially completed 2025 ⁵⁵
3.9 Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service-level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.	CFA and FRV	Partially completed 2025 ⁵⁶
3.10 Where practical and appropriate, finalise any delegation authorisations between CFA and FRV to support the operationalisation of the Service Level Deed of Agreement (SLDA) and schedules.	CFA	Partially completed 2023 ⁵⁷
3.11 CFA to ensure internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the SLDA and schedules.	CFA	Completed 2023 ⁵⁸
3.12 Develop agreements for corporate support functions between CFA and FRV that enable service delivery.	CFA and FRV	Partially completed 2025 ⁵⁹

⁵⁰ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 55.

⁵¹ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 54.

⁵² FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 30.

⁵³ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 56.

⁵⁴ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 58.

⁵⁵ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 59.

⁵⁶ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 62.

⁵⁷ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 71.

⁵⁸ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 75.

⁵⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 65.

Findings and considerations

Measuring against the success statement

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, we note that all required actions were acquitted and consider that the work of the agencies have contributed towards the objectives delineated in the success statement, with the foundational supports required for long-term success in place.

The Priority Three actions are critical to interoperability between the CFA and FRV and the success of a complementary fire service.

Overall, the actions completed have empowered the agencies to embed processes and frameworks that facilitate interagency operations and strengthen their collective capability to support sector-wide responses.

We acknowledge and highly commend all parties on the substantial progress they have made since the start of FSR in progressing a complementary fire service that meets the needs of the community and responds to new challenges and risks. However, we also note the complex challenges of harmonisation and the secondment model.

We acknowledge there is still work to do as part of making the actions BAU and encourage all parties to continue on their journey towards the success statement beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Information and communications technology

Action 3.1 was designed to ensure FRV's ICT was consistent across all its stations to support service delivery.

It required FRV to deliver the following 3 deliverables:

- All transitioned stations and workplaces use a consistent STO system.
- Relevant corporate systems are transferred from CFA to FRV (where mutually agreed) to support transferred employees.
- An ICT strategy maps the future uplift requirements for FRV across operational and corporate areas.

Since acquittal, FRV has advised that the status of its ICT restoration work, following the December 2022 cyber attack, has successfully returned most of the critical services to a sustainable state and delivered uplift across ICT delivery functions. It has also advised all systems relevant to quarterly outcomes reporting have been restored, including the key platforms required to support accurate and timely data reporting.

Going forward, we were informed that FRV has pivoted to a strategic Cyber Uplift Program to run from 2026 to 2028. This will focus on strengthening cyber maturity, addressing residual risks and building long-term capability to better protect the organisation against future threats.

We acknowledge the work FRV has done to rectify ICT issues that were exposed by the cyber attack and the long-term strategic approach to bolstering its cyber maturity and threat response mechanisms.

Acknowledging that the dynamic nature of the ICT landscape gives rise to the need for continuous review, upgrades and associated investment, we consider that while FRV does not necessarily need to always be at the cutting edge of technology, we encourage FRV to ensure its ICT remains modern, efficient, effective and fit for purpose.

Capital works and improvements

Actions 3.2, 3.4 and 3.5 were designed to equip the CFA and FRV with modern infrastructure to ensure effective fire services could be delivered to the community. These actions comprised important capital works projects to stations and appliances, with the agencies collaborating to deliver some of the works on behalf of the other.

Action 3.2 required the CFA to deliver a \$48.2 million fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program to replace priority stations and appliances. The investment aimed to ensure these stations and appliances were fit for purpose and able to meet the demands of the current climactic environment. There were 3 deliverables related to this action.⁶⁰

The CFA has advised us all deliverables were completed. The Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA) is now responsible for coordinating the building of certain CFA assets. CSBA's program status report at the end of May 2025 shows that 7 stations were in practical completion. We note there are a further 17 stations that will be progressed by the CFA and the CSBA as part of BAU.

Action 3.4 required FRV, in consultation with the CFA, to identify capital works required across designated co-located stations and to develop a tenancy agreement for agreed projects. It had 2 deliverables:

- understanding of all outstanding capital works required across designated stations
- agreed capital works framework (tenancy agreement) that provides guidance on delivering capital projects.

Noting that FRV received 9 station builds and modification projects as part of FSR for action 3.4, we reported in our 2023–24 annual report that agreements of capital works and the Tenancy Agreement were foundational steps in the broader plan to replace and upgrade designated stations.

Since acquittal, FRV has informed us that progress on the capital works across the stations has continued, with works at Boronia and Mornington substantively completed.

Action 3.5 required the CFA to complete capital works for 3 fire stations and fleet replacement projects for 14 heavy pumpers and one combined aerial rescue pumper on behalf of FRV. We assessed action 3.5 as partially completed in 2023, noting that the CFA had transitioned the delivery of in-flight projects and responsibility for the 350 Firefighter Program – Capital Sub-Program to FRV and that when in-flight builds were transferred from one agency to another, there was a lack of agreed formalised acceptance criteria to assess the completion of work.

Upon review in 2025, we understand the station and fleet deliverables were completed in full and have reassessed action 3.5 as completed.

At year 5, we commend both agencies on their individual and collaborative progress across the various capital works programs. Acknowledging the challenges, such as cost and/or shortage of materials facing the broader building industry, as experienced by both agencies in delivering capital station builds, we encourage the agencies to continue working closely with government on forward planning and funding submissions for these capital works to enable the delivery of effective fire services to the community.

Transfer of assets and obligations

Transferring assets and obligations (action 3.3) from the CFA to FRV under FSR meant transferring relevant stations, appliances, financial arrangements, employee liabilities, in-flight capital projects and equipment to FRV.

The allocation statements, transfer statements and tools of trade agreement are crucial components to the reform and were delivered over 5 tranches.⁶¹

We commend the CFA on having progressed through the substantial transfer of assets and obligations and understand that the work will continue as part of BAU with oversight by the HoA. We also understand, as advised by FRV, that there are no known impacts to their service delivery despite the remaining work, and interim arrangements are in place to ensure services continue.

⁶⁰ Action 3.2 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

⁶¹ Action 3.3 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

Personal protective clothing

Action 3.6 was designed to ensure FRV firefighters had access to and were protected by modern PPC. It required FRV to equip all FRV firefighters with the new generation PPC garments.

FRV has advised us that as at 30 June 2025, all FRV firefighters have been supplied with the new generation PPC structural ensemble, with more than 26,000 structural PPC garments and more than 18,000 wildfire PPC garments issued. Notably, where possible, FRV has donated PPC that was previously issued to seconded employees back to the CFA for volunteers' use.

We commend FRV on its delivery of the PPC project and encourage FRV to ensure the requisite procurement and supply chain continues so its firefighters are well equipped and protected while serving the community.

Joint governance

Maturation of governance arrangements (action 3.7) that oversaw interoperability procedures and arrangements required joint efforts by the agencies through separate deliverables:

CFA deliverables	FRV deliverables
- Establish the HoA - Establish the Fire Services Operations Committee (FSOC) - Establish the FSOC subcommittees	- Develop a plan of agreed interoperability procedures (IPs) governance framework - Develop agreed IPs with progressive updates - Implement a governance framework

We noted in our 2022–23 annual report that although the action was reported by the agencies as completed in 2023, the particular interdependencies with actions 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 meant some aspects were ongoing. We also noted that several IPs had been reported by FRV as developed because their review of this type of work had transitioned to BAU under FSOC oversight.

At year 5, FRV has advised of the status for the below IPs:

Interoperability procedures	Status as at 30 June 2025
CFA/FRV Joint training and exercising	Under development/review
CFA/FRV Communications	Under development/review
Command and control	Under development/review
Debriefing	Under development/review
Strategic locating of resources for operational readiness	Under development/review
Ground Intelligence	Under development/review
Decontamination	Under development/review
CFA/FRV pre-incident response plans/site specific risk information	Under development/review
Request and use of state fleet aircraft by FRV	Superseded by State arrangements under the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture: Interagency Aviation Operating Procedures – Obtaining Aircraft

Interoperability procedures	Status as at 30 June 2025
Request and use of state fleet and call when needed reconnaissance aircraft by FRV	Superseded by State arrangements under the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture: Interagency Aviation Operating Procedures – Obtaining Aircraft
Mutual operational command support	Completed in November 2020
PTA/Corporate staff support to CFA operations	Completed in December 2021
Activation for incidents where CFA requires FRV support for fire investigation	Completed in January 2023
CFA BA cylinder filing at FRV stations	Completed in February 2023

In 2023, we noted that establishing a formal joint exercising program for co-located stations was an issue and acknowledged the efforts taken by both agencies to progress the matter.⁶² Since acquittal, FRV has advised that a draft joint-exercising planning paper was tabled at the July 2025 FSOC meeting for review and feedback and that a draft joint-exercising IP was submitted to the FSOC Doctrine Subcommittee. FRV has advised that following feedback, an updated version of the drafted IP with an extra addendum to plan, record and report on outcomes of joint exercises will be referred back to the FSOC Doctrine Subcommittee for review.

We have also been advised that discussions at the FSOC on templates for the referral of matters for action and reporting between the various governance bodies is underway, and we strongly support such measures taken to further strengthen governance arrangements for the FSOC and its subcommittees.

We commend both agencies in their continuation as active participants in, and the maturation of, the governance arrangements and the harmonisation of procedures, delegations and SLDAs. Although we note that some meetings have been postponed due to competing operational priorities and unavailability of key members, we understand the members continue to jointly progress key work outside of the formal forums to expedite and continue progress of the committees. These dynamics assist with maintaining the effectiveness of the FSOC in progressing joint decision-making and governance across shared initiatives.

We also understand both agencies have recently added respective representatives from the HoA and the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group (JSWAG) to the FSOC membership to support further stability, accountability and communication upwards to the HoA, supporting coordination and continuity of the agencies' contribution to these forums.

Understanding that the agencies have competing priorities and staff changes are unavoidable, we encourage both agencies to continue working closely through the various governance arrangements and to ensure there is appropriate accountability at each layer for ongoing joint development and implementation of interoperability requirements.

Compliance with training obligations for seconded instructors

Action 3.8 was a joint action designed to facilitate compliance of FRV seconded instructors with the CFA's RTO obligations and requirements. It required both agencies to work together on 3 deliverables.⁶³

⁶² FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 58

⁶³ Action 3.8 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

Although the agencies acquitted the action, we noted the respective acquittal reports did not agree on the status of deliverables. The CFA stated this action is yet to be completed, while FRV stated that residual work will be completed through BAU. We understand that the main crux of the issue pertains to the Child Safe Standards and for instructors to hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Notwithstanding, we understand that action 3.8 intersects with action 5.1, which relates to the capabilities the CFA requires of senior operational staff supplied to it by FRV under the Secondment Agreement. Crucially, action 5.1 also addresses child safety compliance requirements. This action is being driven by the JSWAG and its Child Safety Working Group, with oversight provided by the HoA. We note that the roadmap developed under action 5.1 does address WWCC for seconded instructors, with interim measures proposed to be put in place to mitigate risk where instructors do not hold a valid WWCC.

Ultimately, both agencies agree on the principle that all seconded instructors should hold a valid WWCC, and we understand that FRV has since progressed a related dispute with the UFU, which is being heard by the Fair Work Commission.

At year 5, we acknowledge the actions relating to seconded workforce requirements to be the more complex ones to progress and highly commend both agencies on the efforts to collaborate to the extent possible within the limitations of the industrial arrangements. We also acknowledge the alternative pathways that have been developed with genuine goodwill. However, we are also concerned about how long the WWCC issue has been open and the time it has taken for mitigative options to be canvassed and strongly encourage the agencies to continue open communications to address and progress these secondment challenges through the various joint governance arrangements.

Harmonisation of service delivery and operations

Actions 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 3.12 were designed to cement the practical arrangements required to operationalise complementary fire services. These actions aimed to enable both the CFA and FRV to deliver effective and efficient services to the community.

As we noted earlier, actions 3.7, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 are interconnected, with the governance arrangements established under action 3.7 providing oversight of, and underpinning, the joint responsibilities of both agencies in harmonising procedures to support effective operations between the 2 agencies. As well as the deliverables led by the CFA to finalise delegation authorisations and its internal policies and procedures, this includes to support operationalisation of the SLDA and schedules.⁶⁴

Action 3.9 was a joint action that required the CFA and FRV to agree on how key services would be delivered to the community through 6 deliverables.⁶⁵

Although the agencies acquitted the action, we saw that both acquittal reports indicated some deliverables were not yet complete and would transition to BAU.

Since acquittal, both agencies have advised us that discussions on service delivery plans (SDPs) for land use planning and dangerous goods have begun, as it was agreed that the interim arrangements are not sustainable in the long term.

We have also been made aware that several other SDPs have been developed but not yet finalised. These include SDPs for protective equipment, structural fire safety and use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre campuses. The SDPs for communication technicians and for fire services communication controllers were approved by the HoA post-acquittal to progress to formal consultation with FRV's industrial partner.

⁶⁴The schedules that underpinned SLDAs transitioned to service delivery plans under the agencies' joint Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework, FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 60.

⁶⁵ Action 3.9 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

We understand the SDP for specialist response instructors is no longer required, with the HoA having approved, in August 2025, removing the requirement for its development, noting that the CFA and FRV have reached in-principle agreement for 3 specialist instructors to be seconded to the CFA to deliver these services. The CFA and FRV will ensure these extra secondment positions are captured in an addendum to the Secondment Agreement.

Despite the incomplete SDPs, the agencies have advised us that arrangements remain in place to ensure continued delivery of services and that service delivery risks are monitored through the HoA.

Action 3.10 required the CFA to finalise relevant delegations to enable FRV service provision in the CAoV, as specified in the SLDA and schedules relating to the following services/legislation:

- fire investigation
- dangerous goods
- structural fire safety
- caravan parks
- land use planning
- *Building Act 1993*.

As reported in 2023, while the CFA acquitted the action, it could not lawfully delegate all powers to FRV for end-to-end service delivery for dangerous goods, caravan parks and land use planning. The CFA advised us that where new arrangements were established under action 3.9, the delegations and authorisations will be reviewed and updated to support agreed arrangements established under the SLDA.⁶⁶

Since acquittal, we understand the legislative barriers that constrained the CFA's ability to delegate the 3 outstanding powers remain. However, the CFA has advised that the agencies have an agreed standard practice whereby the CFA would contact FRV at the start of each quarter to confirm if changes are required to delegations. The FSIM has viewed evidence of such an updated instrument of delegation and instrument of authorisation for FRV employees providing these services to the CFA dated November 2024.

We acknowledge the efforts of the agencies to co-deliver such services in the CAoV and recognise that the agencies have shown genuine and sustained tenacity to develop alternative ways for delivering services to the community when the legislative environment has not been conducive to complete interoperability for this action.

Action 3.11 required the CFA to develop internal policies to support SLDA and schedule arrangements. We noted that the key deliverables were also duplicated in action 3.9:⁶⁷

- Review and update of IPs underpinning the CFA/FRV Joint Operational Activity memorandum of understanding (MoU).
- Harmonisation of operational doctrine via the established doctrine working group.

Also, we noted above, action 3.7 intersects with actions 3.9 and 3.11 in the development and update of IPs and establishing the FSOC Doctrine Subcommittee as part of the governance structure.

Since acquittal, the CFA has advised of no changes required and that the interconnected actions deliver holistically on the required outputs and outcomes.

Action 3.12 was a joint action that required the CFA and FRV to ensure service delivery requirements are supported through fit-for-purpose agreements. The action had 4 deliverables.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 72.

⁶⁷ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 74.

⁶⁸ Action 3.12 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

The agencies both acquitted the action, noting that the sub-schedules for the 3 co-located brigades were incomplete and would progress under BAU.

However, since acquittal, both agencies have advised us that the South Warrandyte sub-schedule has now been finalised while work on the Dandenong and Melton sub-schedules are still progressing.

At year 5, we highly commend both agencies on their individual and collaborative progress towards joint interoperability opportunities to provide a complementary fire service to the community and to strengthen the working relationship between the agencies. We acknowledge the significant challenges in harmonisation activities, particularly the limitations presented by legislative and EA requirements. We strongly encourage the agencies to continue building on the foundation they have established under reform and to continue pursuing changes, incrementally or otherwise, for the betterment of a truly complementary fire service.

Priority Four: Valuing our people

What success looks like at year 5

Success statement

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan defined success at year 5 for Priority Four as:

Fire service agencies are safe, inclusive and diverse workplaces, respected and trusted by the communities they serve. All people in our fire services have access to support, high-quality training, professional development and equipment.

	The CFA	FRV
What this means for	The CFA's brand remains trusted, its connection to community is welcomed and its history of contributing to Victoria is valued and appreciated. The CFA is a great place to work and volunteer, reflecting the diversity of the community and where people are safe and respected.	FRV provides a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace and has a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve to better meet the needs of all Victorians. FRV culture and values define FRV leadership, relationships and the way FRV interacts with employees and the community. The FRV brand is valued, and people are attracted and proud to work for FRV. The health, safety and wellbeing of firefighters is a priority given their workplace exposure to hazardous and potentially traumatic incidents.

Actions under this priority

Priority Four had 10 actions to be delivered by DJCS, the FRB and the fire agencies through individual or joint efforts.

The actions below were developed to operationalise and embed practices and outcomes that would strengthen inclusion and diversity in the fire services and ensure all staff feel safe and supported in their workplace.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
4.1 Appoint the Firefighters Registration Board.	DJCS	Completed 2024 ⁶⁹
4.2 The Firefighters Registration Board establishes criteria and processes to support registration of suitably qualified secondees from FRV to CFA.	FRB	Completed 2025 ⁷⁰
4.3 Complete delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project.	CFA	Completed 2025 ⁷¹

⁶⁹ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 66.

⁷⁰ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 66.

⁷¹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 67.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
4.4 Define FRV values and culture and deliver supporting programs of work: • Develop FRV values • Strategy to embed FRV values • Leadership development and capability.	FRV	Completed 2023 ⁷²
4.5 Define a program of work to strengthen CFA's organisational culture, diversity and inclusion.	CFA	Completed 2024 ⁷³
4.6 Develop the following documents to support inclusion and diversity across FRV: • Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan. • Gender Equity Action Plan. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.	FRV	Completed 2025 ⁷⁴
4.7 Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models.	CFA	Completed 2024 ⁷⁵
4.8 Identify new opportunities to recognise and value the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters to delivering fire services (e.g. communications and collaboration).	CFA and FRV	Completed 2023 ⁷⁶
4.9 Develop a recruitment strategy and campaign to support increased gender diversity across all firefighting ranks. Review the recruitment process, training and promotional pathways to ensure they support the retention of a gender diverse workforce.	FRV	Completed 2025 ⁷⁷
4.10 Support diversity and inclusion in CFA and make progress towards delivering on the commitment to increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent.	CFA	Completed 2023 ⁷⁸

⁷² FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 84.

⁷³ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 71.

⁷⁴ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 68.

⁷⁵ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 73.

⁷⁶ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 92.

⁷⁷ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 70.

⁷⁸ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 96.

Findings and considerations

Measuring against the success statement

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, we note that all required actions were acquitted and consider that the work delivered has contributed towards the delineated success statement, with the foundational supports required for long-term success in place.

The Priority Four actions consider the most important element of both agencies – their people.

Overall, completing the actions has set a strong foundation that enable both the CFA and FRV to be safe, respectful, inclusive and diverse workplaces that people trust and are proud to volunteer and work for, as well as access to support, high-quality training and professional development. Not least, it also highlights the importance of reward and recognition as drivers in positive behaviours, performance and morale.

We highly commend all parties on the work undertaken to ensure their services and people reflect the broader Victorian community and model the values their communities expect. We also acknowledge that the fire agencies have made concerted efforts to foster a respectful culture among and between their workforces.

We note the agencies both acknowledge there is still work to do as part of BAU and encourage all parties to continue on their journey towards the success statement beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Firefighters Registration Scheme

The appointment of the FRB (action 4.1) and operational establishment of the Firefighters Registration Scheme (action 4.2) were designed to support the broader secondment model through regulation by an independent entity.

The FRB had to be set up before work could begin to establish competencies that would satisfy the requirements for the Firefighters Register, to administer the scheme and to maintain the register.

Action 4.1 required DJCS, in consultation with the CFA and FRV to:

- develop the Fire Rescue Victoria (Firefighters Registration Board) Regulations 2022
- implement the regulations, including appointing members and establishing the supporting office.

Since acquittal, we are aware that the FRB has been convening regularly and has also successfully discharged its legislative functions.

Action 4.2 required the FRB to establish criteria and processes to register suitably qualified secondees from FRV to the CFA through 4 deliverables.⁷⁹

We were advised that the FRB engaged closely with both fire agencies as well as Emergency Management Victoria to develop the registration requirements for the ranks of assistant chief fire officer (ACFO) and commander and launched the scheme on 4 December 2024.⁸⁰

In 2024–25 the FRB advised that they received 3 applications for inclusion on the register of which 2 were assessed during the same period. The third application was received in June 2025 and assessed after 30 June 2025.

The FRB has also advised of challenges, including that the scheme is mandatory only for lateral entrants seeking to be employed by FRV to be seconded to the CFA (that is, applying directly for a secondment position). And because registration is not mandated for the existing workforce, FRV has initiated minimal internal messaging on the scheme.

⁷⁹ Action 4.2 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

⁸⁰ Refer to the [Firefighters Registration Scheme](#).

At year 5, we commend DJCS and the FRB on their work to establish the FRB and to administer the scheme. However, we also note this has limitations and only addresses one small aspect of the reform arrangement. Registration of lateral entrants under the scheme does not necessarily mean they meet FRV employment requirements. Also, it is uncertain as to how effectively the scheme can fulfill the CFA's workforce requirements.

The FRB has advised that stakeholders have not raised issues or concerns with the arrangements. Links to the current regulations and information about FRB and its membership are publicly available on its website.⁸¹

Volunteer safety

Action 4.3 was designed to improve the skills, capability and safety of CFA volunteers through 3 initiatives that make up the volunteers' health and safety initiatives program.⁸²

We see that action 4.3 shares similar intended outcomes as those under 'Volunteer lifecycle' in Priority One.⁸³ Improving volunteer safety can be considered part of their support and training. At year 5, we highly commend the CFA on its work to holistically enhance support for volunteers across the lifecycle and encourage the CFA to continue improving its services to its volunteers to enable them to safely serve their communities as best as possible.

Diversity and inclusion

Actions 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.9 and 4.10 were designed to promote and champion diversity and inclusive behaviours and practices within the CFA and FRV.

We noted in our 2021–22 annual report⁸⁴ that we considered action 5.3 to have interdependencies with 7 actions, which also include the 5 actions under this section.

FRV culture

Action 4.4 required FRV to define its values and show how they are sustained through its organisational programs, practices and behaviours.

In our 2022–23 annual report, we identified the risk that FRV had not prioritised complaints management (particularly collecting data and reporting) and this could negatively affect the Values program.

Since acquittal, FRV has provided evidence of having advanced its complaints framework, integrating it with the Cultural Transformation Plan. Comprehensive policy and procedure review and development have taken place, and a policy suite is currently subject to consultation.

FRV also included 5 custom questions specific to reporting improper conduct, which enabled capturing that baseline data as part of the 2025 Victorian Public Sector Commission's People Matter Survey. Its analysis of the baseline data showed strong awareness and willingness to report improper conduct but lower levels of trust in FRV's response and support mechanisms. To address this, FRV has conducted integrity-focused information sessions and continues to capture complaints through internal mechanisms. Future improvements will be guided by local culture action plans informed by recent survey results.

We also noted that the lack of transparent employee experience data to inform FRV's identification and management of issues could pose considerable risks to FRV's ability to implement defined values and programs that support leadership, relationships and the way it operates.

⁸¹ Refer to the [Firefighters Registration Board](#).

⁸² Action 4.3 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

⁸³ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 18.

⁸⁴ FSIM, [Annual Report 2021–22](#), p. 120.

However, FRV has advised that the Victorian Public Sector Commission recorded 1,019 FRV respondents to the People Matters Survey, equating to only 21% of its workforce compared with a response rate of 56% across the Victorian public service for the same period. Going forward, we encourage FRV to consider strategies that would improve uptake in future surveys to make these results more meaningful.

We have viewed evidence that FRV has released analysis of the results to its employees and that action planning is underway across all its departments. This will be published on the organisation's intranet, together with defined measures of success, enabling all employees to monitor progress over time.

FRV has given us its Culture Transformation Plan, which sets out how FRV will foster a culture where everyone belongs and thrives, and is aligned in vision, accountable in action and strengthened by difference. Designed to ignite trust, the plan runs from 2025 to 2029 and includes complaints indicators and metrics.

We were informed that work to uplift FRV's framework for managing unacceptable behaviour in the workplace has been undertaken over the past 2 years. As a result, FRV has seen a decrease from 2024 in reported discrimination and sexual harassment in its People Matter Survey compared with results in the 2024 Gender Equality Commissioner's survey. While FRV cites this is a positive outcome, it also recognises the need to remain committed to addressing negative workplace behaviours.

FRV provided evidence to support the acquittal of all deliverables and subsequently we assessed action 4.4 as completed in 2023,⁸⁵ noting that the Embedding FRV Values program continues beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan. FRV has indicated that, post-implementation, this work transitions from reform-focused to and that key outcomes are to become part of standard FRV practices, processes and policies.

Actions 4.6 and 4.9 collectively required FRV to embed and support diversity and inclusion across all functions and levels of the organisation through plan development and to apply those plans, particularly across its approach to recruitment and supporting the government's commitment to increase the number of women firefighters in FRV.⁸⁶

We consider the work FRV has completed in acquitting these actions as foundational and understand that progress will continue under BAU.

FRV has advised these plans will be embedded into its annual business planning processes and that regular progress reporting will be conducted and submitted to its Executive Leadership team and to external bodies such as the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and Reconciliation Australia.

We have been made aware that FRV is undertaking a workplace gender audit ahead of submission to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in December 2025.

FRV has stated that attracting and retaining a diverse range of applicants continues as a long-term priority. The cyclical review of recruitment activities and procedures to assess the impact in attracting and recruiting diverse candidates is now imbedded in its recruitment cycle.

Since acquittal, FRV has also advised of new initiatives:

- developing the breastfeeding and menopause doctrine, to be launched in quarter 2 of 2025–26
- establishing a mentoring program for women firefighters to build skills to mentor and support colleagues
- establishing a Recruitment Working Party to jointly consider and develop strategies to increase diversity within the FRV operational workforce.

At year 5, we highly commend FRV on its progress in establishing and furthering diversity and inclusion values and practices at all ranks, roles and functions across the organisation. With the ever-changing societal landscape, it is important for FRV's workforce to reflect societal and community expectations, and we encourage FRV to continue on that journey.

⁸⁵ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), pp. 83 and 84.

⁸⁶ Actions 4.6 and 4.9 deliverables as listed in the Appendix.

CFA culture

Actions 4.5 and 4.10 collectively required the CFA to strengthen its culture, diversity and inclusion in the organisation through developing enabling plans and to deliver on a commitment to increase the number of women in brigade leadership roles.

The deliverables under action 4.5 included:

- Develop a culture and issues management action plan.
- Develop a child safety compliance plan.
- Develop a diversity and inclusion strategy.
- Develop a mental health for leaders program.
- Deliver Fire Services Statement-funded initiatives.

Although the action was acquitted and we found it to be complete, we also noted in our 2023–24 annual report there were concerns about FRV secondees' low rates of compliance with the CFA's Child Safety Compliance Plan and the subsequent risks presented to the CFA of not complying with the Child Safe Standards.

Since acquittal, we acknowledge the ongoing efforts that occur within the CFA in managing the seconded workforce in relation to compliance risks to the Child Safe Standards. This is discussed under the 'Compliance with training obligations for seconded training staff' and 'Seconded workforce requirements' sections of this report.

The CFA has advised of actions undertaken to strengthen its organisational culture including commissioning a 2025 independent review of progress to date in implementing the 2022 external review. The CFA also informed us that future work will include an ongoing focus on strengthening culture and diversity, with plan implementation overseen by the CFA Executive Committee and Board.

The CFA has also advised us of its Mental Health for Leaders program, which included:

- a Leading for Wellbeing workshop and eLearn (launched in August 2023)
- a Psychological First Aid for Leaders workshop (to be piloted soon)
- consultations with regional Member Wellbeing advisors (mental health clinicians) to guide management of individual and team psychological health issues.

Notably, the CFA has advised that the eLearn has been completed by 577 leaders, with strong and consistent feedback scores indicating participants found it interesting, useful and relevant to their roles. To date, the Leading for Wellbeing workshop has had limited uptake, with members indicating a preference for the more flexible online learning option.

We acknowledged in our 2023–24 annual report that in acquitting action 4.10, the CFA was embedding diversity and inclusion to drive positive change that reflected its organisational values and behaviours and that the activity would be long term and extend beyond the life of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

At the time of acquittal, the CFA's commitment to increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15% was met, with us observing 17.5% of volunteer leadership roles were filled by women in quarter 4 of 2022–23.

Since acquittal, we note the number of women in brigade leadership roles continues to increase, with 18.5% of volunteer leadership roles filled by women as reported by the CFA against measure 3.2.2 *Increase in women in volunteer leadership roles* of its Outcomes Framework for quarter 4 of 2024–25.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ CFA Q4 Outcomes Framework – Quarterly Report 24–25

At year 5, we highly commend the CFA on its progress in furthering its diversity and inclusion agenda across the organisation and recognise the positive increases not only of women volunteers in leadership roles but also those in operational roles and women staff in senior roles. We encourage the CFA to build on the strong foundations it has established and continue driving cultural change and increasing workforce inclusion and diversity through leadership as well as strategic and operational initiatives.

Leadership

Action 4.7 required the CFA to develop a scope for leadership roles (particularly operational leadership) that reflect contemporary brigade and group models.

Our 2022–23 annual report noted that the work program under action 1.7 provided a logical sequence of activities to resolve broader questions on the CFA's Operating Model, which were required to inform the delivery and implementation of action 4.7.

As part of the DJCS-led review of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, which received formal ministerial approval in July 2024, the CFA advised that action 4.7 would be delivered under the CFA's Operating Model Program work, of which the progress of the CFA is discussed further under the 'Operating model' section of this report.

Reward and recognition

Action 4.8 was a joint action that required the CFA and FRV to identify new opportunities to recognise and value the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters to delivering fire services (for example, communications and collaboration).

Valuing the CFA workforce

In delivering this action, the CFA focused on addressing the identified gap to recognise secondees and their service while in the CFA via nominations for national awards, including the Australian Fire Services Medal and the National Emergency Medal. The CFA also focused on ensuring FRV secondees could be recognised for their service and contribution to the CFA via CFA service awards.

Since acquittal, the CFA informed us of the following proactive measures introduced to elicit nominations to recognise the admirable service of its people:

- publishing 'how to' guides and resources
- personalised help to nominators
- active promotion of the call for nominations through all channels (including the Women's Advisory Committee and Young Adults Advisory Committee)
- publicly championing all award recipients
- launching a new Honours & Awards search and filter dashboard that allows the Board's Honours and Awards Committee to monitor trends.

We noted in our 2022–23 annual report that the CFA was actively promoting award schemes to volunteers and was undertaking work to identify, understand and address barriers to women nominating or being nominated for awards.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 92.

These barriers include:

- limited awareness and understanding of award types, eligibility and how to nominate
- feelings of modesty or a reluctance to seek recognition
- strict limits on the number of Australian Fire Services Medals awarded each year
- the Australian Fire Services Medal was created to recognise people in the fire services whose roles are inherently more hazardous than most others and these roles have traditionally been held by more men than women.

We commend the CFA for its work to address barriers to the formal recognition of its women members and encourage the CFA continue its efforts to increase the number of women celebrated for their contribution to delivering fire services.

The CFA has for many years held an annual Firefighter Memorial Service to remember those firefighters who gave their lives to protect others and to honour the personal sacrifices and commitment firefighters make every day. The CFA's fallen firefighters are also commemorated at the Victorian Emergency Services Memorial in Treasury Gardens and the national memorial site.

The CFA has advised that its Communications and Stakeholder Relations team uses a range of channels to inform, connect and celebrate its people and the CFA's work including through its weekly e-news, regular Volunteer Forum and Staff Forum sessions, all-staff and all-member emails, Members Online content, periodic video updates and social media activity. Its annual report to Parliament summarises the CFA's key achievements.

Valuing the FRV workforce

In delivering this action, FRV focused on establishing an honours and awards process that includes an Honours & Awards Committee, an Australian Fire Services Medal Committee, drafting an honours and awards manual, a suite of FRV internal medals and certificates, and recognition of FRV fallen firefighters at the state and national memorial sites. FRV notes that the Honours & Awards Committee assesses nominations from across FRV and makes recommendations to the Fire Rescue Commissioner of awards and recognition of their people.

FRV has highlighted that it recommends and bestows honours and awards to recognise, celebrate and say thank you to those who have given their time to serve others and to those who achieve their best for FRV and the community.

An example of this is the FRV Long and Good Service Awards, awarded to uniform, corporate, technical and workshop employees and recognises FRV people for their long service, good conduct and accomplishments. These awards are an important part of bringing FRV's values to life by formally recognising an employee's service and commitment to the organisation by achieving service milestones.

People who have achieved a long service milestone by 30 June are invited to a ceremony to receive their award from the Fire Rescue Commissioner or a member of the Executive Leadership team. FRV has advised there were 1,044 recipients in the 2024–25 reporting period.

FRV has also advised its Internal Communications and Engagement team uses a range of channels to inform, connect and celebrate its people and FRV's work, including:

- FRV News – FRV's official staff fortnightly newsletter. The newsletter informs and engages the workforce on news, issues, trends and employee profiles.
- FRV intranet – features news on topics that align with FRV's purpose and the 5 pillars detailed in the 10-year strategic plan.
- Intranet featured news banner – appears at the top of the intranet homepage and is updated weekly.
- All-staff emails – reserved for major announcements, leadership messages or situations where people need to act.

- FRV Connect – online sessions via Microsoft Teams featuring short presentations plus Q&As on a range of topics from operational and corporate colleagues.
- Online information sessions – quarterly or one-off sessions focused on a specific topic such as integrity series led by the Governance and Compliance team.
- Video updates – primarily used by the Fire Rescue Commissioner but available to teams/departments to promote project milestones, new initiatives and so on.
- What's on at FRV – monthly email bulletin for operational and corporate people leaders.
- 'What's on' calendar – supported by a dedicated intranet page that highlights key dates for the coming month.
- Team Talks – produced to help people leaders communicate important updates to their teams. Leaders are encouraged to use Team Talks for complex information or situations and team members are likely to have questions.

FRV's External Communications team makes extensive use of the traditional media, print, broadcast and online, social media channels Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, the FRV website and the FRV annual report to feature stories that recognise and value contributions made by its people. The emphasis is on promoting the work of FRV personnel and their unwavering commitment to protecting life and property, either on the frontline or in support roles.

FRV noted that its people embrace the internal and external channels and platforms available to promote their work, with submissions to feature people, stories, photos and important safety information regularly received from across the organisation.

Priority Five: Ensure the future sustainability of fire services

What success looks like at year 5

Success statement

The Year 2–5 Implementation Plan defined success at year 5 for Priority Five as:

Fire agencies and the government use evidence-based planning and continuous improvement strategies to support a shared understanding of risk and capability. Working together, we create a more sustainable service which meets community needs and expectations now and into the future.

	The CFA	FRV
What this means for	The CFA and its stakeholders share an understanding of risk, capability and capacity and the resources required to deliver services aligned to government and community expectations. The CFA understands current risk drivers and can forecast and respond to the future risk environment that considers future climate scenarios. The CFA and government have a shared understanding of the budget required to effectively deliver the required fire and emergency services commensurate with community expectations in the CAoV.	FRV ensures fire and rescue resources in Melbourne and regional Victoria are allocated to where they are needed most. Resource allocation is informed by regular assessment of current and future risk, an understanding of community profiles and the latest research and information on emergency prevention and response. The distribution of resources aims to meet community expectations and the ongoing financial sustainability of FRV.

Actions under this priority

Priority Five had 8 actions for the CFA, DJCS and FRV to acquit, either through individual or joint efforts.

The intent behind the actions below was to assist the fire agencies to identify opportunities for efficiencies, improve performance and provide insights that can underpin viable and sustainable services into the future.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
5.1 Capability and capacity requirements of the seconded workforce to deliver an effective CFA are clearly articulated by CFA, and FRV establishes a roadmap to deliver on these requirements in alignment with the legislative obligations of both organisations.	CFA and FRV	Completed 2025 ⁸⁹
5.2 DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state service delivery capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks.	DJCS	Completed 2025 ⁹⁰

⁸⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 73.

⁹⁰ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 75.

Action	Lead agency	FSIM finding
5.3 Develop an FRV Strategy.	FRV	Completed 2023 ⁹¹
5.4 Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.	FRV	Partially completed 2023 ⁹² Completed 2025 ⁹³
5.5 Conduct an initial financial sustainability assessment of FRV and CFA.	DJCS	Completed 2023 ⁹⁴
5.6 Develop an initial funding plan that addresses high-priority funding requirements for CFA and FRV in years 3 and 4 of the Fire Services Reform and addresses the impact of: - transfers of functions, resources and assets between CFA and FRV - the change to the FRV fire district upon the fire services property levy revenue base after the commencing day - any changes to the differential rates of the fire services property levy after the commencing day.	DJCS	Completed 2023 ⁹⁵
5.7 Capture the operational costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria based on 3 years of financial reporting.	DJCS	Completed 2024 ⁹⁶
5.8 CFA and FRV to ensure internal budgets consider the funding estimates over the forward years provided by the Victorian Government.	DJCS	Completed 2024 ⁹⁷

Findings and considerations

Measuring against the success statement

At the end of the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan, we note that all required actions were acquitted and consider that the work of the CFA, DJCS and FRV has contributed towards the objective delineated in the success statement, with the foundational supports required for long-term success in place.

The Priority Five actions are crucial foundational elements to the overall FSR, with DJCS supporting the fire agencies to meet statutory obligations, community expectations and remain sustainable into the future.

⁹¹ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 104.

⁹² FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 106.

⁹³ FSIM, [Annual Report 2024–25](#), p. 49.

⁹⁴ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 108.

⁹⁵ FSIM, [Annual Report 2022–23](#), p. 109.

⁹⁶ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 80.

⁹⁷ FSIM, [Annual Report 2023–24](#), p. 81.

Overall, the completed actions have paved the way for the fire agencies to identify opportunities for efficiencies, to improve performance and to embed business and operational practices that reflect complementary fire services. Viability and sustainability are ongoing challenges.

We acknowledge and commend all parties on the work undertaken to review elements of capability (action 5.2) and take part in costing studies and planning activities (actions 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7).

Understanding service costs and developing plans is simply a starting point. Employee and volunteer recruitment, including the ageing workforce and implementing the Secondment Agreement have been the main issues affecting agency people-related capacity and capability to deliver services that meet community expectations, and these are likely to extend beyond FSR. There are challenges in other aspects of capability and capacity including fleet management, providing contemporary training and the ability to fund innovation.

We acknowledge there is still work to do as part of BAU and encourage all parties to continue their journey towards the success statement beyond the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Seconded workforce requirements

Action 5.1 was a joint action with 3 deliverables designed to outline the operational parameters and needs of the seconded workforce.⁹⁸

Although both agencies acquitted the action, we noted the differing views on the deliverables.

This action was updated in July 2024 to more accurately reflect what FRV could potentially deliver in the context of its complex industrial environment while recognising it may not fully deliver on the workforce needs of the CFA.

Since acquittal, we have received differing advice from the agencies on how this action will be progressed, with the CFA advising they will continue to work with FRV, through JSWAG, to strengthen the gap analysis and roadmap, whereas FRV has informed us that they wish to develop a new 'secondment strategic roadmap' intended to guide implementation strategies in areas including workforce planning, vacancy fulfillment and interagency collaboration.

Also, as mentioned under 'Compliance with training obligations for seconded instructors' above,⁹⁹ child safety requirements and the requirement for FRV secondees who work with children and young people to hold a valid WWCC has been a contentious issue with the UFU. Reiterating our findings earlier, compliance with child safety requirements is critical and is being driven by the Child Safety Working Group, with oversight provided by the HoA. Seconded positions that have a direct connection to children and young people under 18 must comply with the requirements of the Child Safe Standards. We note that FRV is progressing a dispute with the UFU on the WWCC requirement for all seconded positions through the Fair Work Commission.

At year 5, we acknowledge the progress the agencies have made to work together to find solutions that could achieve success for the secondment model. The secondment model is critical to the success of FSR, and its implications are likely to be far-reaching in terms of the future sustainability of fire services. We understand both agencies support the ongoing progression of work through BAU and strongly encourage them to continue working together to achieve the shared objectives, noting that FRV's industrial environment will play a key role in how this matter resolves.

⁹⁸ Action 5.1 deliverables as listed in the Appendix A.

⁹⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 33.

Fiscal responsibility and planning

Assessment of the agencies' financial sustainability (action 5.5), budget/cost management and future funding needs (actions 5.2, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8) were all undertaken by DJCS with input from the CFA and FRV.

Acknowledging both DJCS's portfolio responsibility for supporting government in respect of the financial sustainability of the fire agencies, as managed through the State Budget process, and the broader work by government on financial sustainability across the whole emergency sector, both of which fall outside of FSR, we have chosen not to monitor and report further on these actions beyond their acquittal under the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

The actions have all been acquitted with action 5.2 in 2025.¹⁰⁰ We understand that DJCS and the agencies will continue working together to address and manage future financial pressures driven by changes in community demands on fire and rescue service delivery and each agency's capacity and capability to respond to such changes.

We consider the outcomes of these actions paramount to the long-term success of FSR and its impact across Victorian communities. We encourage all parties to engage early, openly and transparently to manage the balance between what is needed for success and fiscal responsibility.

FRV strategic planning

FRV was required to develop the FRV Strategy (action 5.3) to set the organisation's direction for the next 10 years and a Strategic Workforce Plan (action 5.4) that ensures FRV would have the workforce capacity, capability and culture required to deliver on community expectations, especially in regional and remote areas, including FRV's secondment obligations to the CFA.

The FRV Strategy describes establishing 'targeted approaches to mitigate and manage community safety risks developed in partnership with relevant organisations'¹⁰¹ as an indication that intended aims are being achieved.

Since acquittal, FRV has advised us of its approach for improved community focus (targeting regional and rural communities) and the transition to a modern, trusted and inclusive fire service. This will be delivered under the umbrella of developing community risk assessments and embedding a continuous improvement cycle – refer to 'Community risk-based service delivery' above.¹⁰²

We also consider the alignment between the strategic pillars defined in the FRV Strategy and outcomes measured through indicators contained in its Outcomes Framework to indicate FRV's success in meeting the strategy's aims. FRV has reported an overall positive trend in the number of people engaging with the Fire Equipment Services over the past 3 years.¹⁰³ Fire Equipment Services provides emergency management training and instruction in evacuation drills and delivers other education sessions. The increasing number of people taking part in these services represents growth in FRV's community focus. We also view the focus on at-risk-groups¹⁰⁴ and fire safety education and tailored services for adult migrants¹⁰⁵ and seniors¹⁰⁶ as more evidence of FRV's efforts to connect and understand the community it serves.

The process of developing the Strategic Workforce Plan 2022–2027 was complex and multipronged. As well as including a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services, FRV was also tasked with forecasting changing workforce requirements through to 2026 and outlining the actions required to ensure it has the workforce capacity, capability and culture required to deliver on community expectations and secondment obligations to the CFA.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 75.

¹⁰¹ FRV, Inaugural Strategic Plan, 2022–2032, p. 19.

¹⁰² FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 24.

¹⁰³ Annual figures for this indicator are: 2022–23 – 5,603; 2023–24 – 5,200; and 2024–25 – 6,029.

¹⁰⁴ FRV, [People at higher risk](#).

¹⁰⁵ FRV, [Fire safety for adult migrants](#).

¹⁰⁶ FRV, [Seniors' fire safety](#).

¹⁰⁷ Victorian Government (2023) 'Action 5.4 Objective' Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan, p. 30.

We assessed action 5.3 as partially completed in 2023 on the grounds that the Strategic Workforce Plan¹⁰⁸ had not included the forecasted number of seconded staff to the CFA, despite an initiative under the plan being to ensure a pipeline of appropriately skilled ACFOs and commanders were available to the CFA to provide services to the CAoV.

The requirement to support the CFA through secondees intersects with action 5.1 and the need for the CFA's Capability Statement, which outlines the necessary skills, qualifications and attributes of seconded staff.

Since acquittal, progress includes those discussed under 'Seconded workforce requirements' above.¹⁰⁹ FRV also advised that it completed a technical capability gap analysis and roadmap to address the skills, qualifications and experience that the CFA has determined are helpful when delivering services in rural and remote areas, with a detailed implementation plan under development to show how the roadmap will be delivered to meet the CFA's requirements. The JSWAG established the foundation for a 10-year workforce plan with current and future state defined, operational, tactical and strategic actions to bridge the gaps.

Furthermore, FRV advises it had developed a Secondment Management Roadmap that aims to address immediate, medium to long-term challenges within the seconded workforce. A workshop is also planned for both agencies to agree on shared priorities and identify the actions for short and long-term success.

Upon review in 2025, we have reassessed action 5.4 as completed.

We are also aware of FRV's revised Outcomes Framework and the intention to provide us with data gathered for each measure in 2025–26. It may be useful for FRV to test the effectiveness of its Strategic Workforce Plan by including measures relating to knowledge and satisfaction of services it delivers on behalf of the CFA in the CAoV, to help guide initiatives and resource allocation.

At year 5, we commend FRV on its work to embed the FRV Strategy. We also acknowledge the significant efforts made to develop initiatives that have the potential to drive workforce requirements for FRV and the CFA in line with the Secondment Agreement.

¹⁰⁸ We viewed a draft of the workforce plan for our assessment in the 2022–23 reporting period.

¹⁰⁹ FSIM, Annual Report 2024–25, p. 48.

Appendix: Status of year 5 actions as at 30 June 2025

Overview

In 2024–25, agencies completed 14 actions and formally acquitted each of these actions.

As at 30 June 2025, agencies reported that:

- 10 actions were completed
- 4 actions were partially completed and will be transitioned to business as usual (BAU).

The below table provides definitions for the agency-reported status of implementation plan actions. These definitions are different from those used in previous reports, reflecting this assessment is the final for the Year 2–5 Implementation Plan.

Status	Assessment definitions
Completed	Action is acquitted with all deliverables completed.
Partially completed	Action is acquitted, with residual work to transition to BAU.

Priority One: Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighting organisation

Action 1.3

Descriptor	Deliver the Volunteer Support Package
Objective	To reinvigorate stakeholder engagement in the post Fire Services Reform environment
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	• CFA Pocketbook • Brigade capability review • CFA volunteer workwear • FIRS release 3 • Volunteer Recruitment Hub release 4 • Digital Stores Project
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

CFA Pocketbook

The CFA Pocketbook app gives members easy access to critical operational and procedural information in a digital format. An important feature of the app is that it can be used when no internet connection is available. The application was soft launched in September 2024 to more than 700 CFA members, followed by a full launch in November 2024.

The CFA Pocketbook is available for download via the Google Play Store and Apple iOS Store, with QR codes and access links provided to members. As at 30 June 2025, the Pocketbook app had been downloaded 6,467 times.

Fire and Incident Reporting System release 3

FIRS release 3 was launched in November 2024 and includes enhancements to the system's administration and configuration. This functionality provides the ability for brigades to report activity related to planned burns taking place across the state in an online mode. FIRS online allows brigades to access the system on their mobile phone, tablet or PC via the CFA's Members Online portal.

Volunteer Recruitment Hub release 4

The Volunteer Recruitment Hub release 4 introduces enhancements to streamline the volunteer onboarding process and enhance recruitment efforts. Version 4.2 of the system was released in October 2024. A current review of volunteer recruitment and onboarding will inform ongoing improvements to these processes including the next priority system enhancements for the Volunteer Recruitment Hub.

Digital Stores Project

The CFA's Digital Stores functionality is being delivered as part of the CFA's upgrade to its financial system. The project involves developing a digital procurement tool that provides an end-to-end electronic ordering system for brigades, districts and other users to efficiently manage and order supplies with accurate information on supply availability and estimated delivery times.

FSIM's findings

Action 1.3 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that CFA has completed the action's deliverables, noting that the supply of workwear for volunteers has transitioned to BAU and that Digital Stores will be continually improved over time.

We understand that Digital Stores is being made available to all volunteers through 2 separate releases. Release 1 (14 July 2025) enabled volunteers to place orders for structural personal protective clothing and workwear, while release 2 will extend the functionality such as the facility to manage brigade purchase orders.

Action 1.4

Descriptor	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses
Objective	Update key CFA training programs to support volunteer operational capability development
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses
Completion date	30 November 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

The Crew and Strike Team Leader courses are designed to increase participants' leadership skills and confidence in challenging environments.

The new Strike Team Leader courses started in November 2024 to strengthen volunteer capability ahead of the 2024–25 fire season. The Crew Leader Course began in January 2025 via the CFA's learning hub.

As at 30 June 2025, 395 crew leaders and 59 strike team leaders have completed the training.

FSIM's findings

Action 1.4 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that the CFA has completed the deliverable.

Action 1.6

Descriptor	Review and update training as part of the Develop Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers
Objective	CFA's training program for new operational members is fit for purpose, preparing and supporting members to safely meet their role and responsibilities
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	- Review and update the CFA's General Firefighter (GFF) training program - Issue personal protective clothing (PPC) in line with project funding and establish process to ensure issue to new volunteers who have completed GFF training
Completion date	December 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

Review and update the CFA's GFF training program

The CFA began delivering GFF version 2 training in October 2024. The updated training incorporates digital assessments and online modules, providing greater flexibility and accessibility for members.

For business continuity, the CFA continued to deliver the GFF version 1 training until March 2025, ensuring continuity for all members who had started the previous version.

As at 30 June 2025, 1,262 members completed the GFF training (versions 1 and 2).

FSIM's findings

Action 1.6 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that the CFA has completed the action's deliverables.

Priority Three: Plan and build for the future

Action 3.2

Descriptor	Deliver the fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program
Objective	Priority stations and appliances are replaced to ensure they are fit for purpose and enhance operational response
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	• Agreed specifications for capital programs (station builds and appliances) • Contracts in place for the delivery of 50 replacement appliances • Contracts in place for the delivery of replacement fire stations funded through this investment
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

Contracts in place for the delivery of 50 replacement appliances

This deliverable is completed. In the first quarter of 2024–25, the CFA received 13 heavy tankers, completing the delivery of 48 heavy tankers and 2 crew cab light tankers under the Tanker Replacement Project.

Contracts in place for the delivery of replacement fire stations funded through this investment

Of the 16 stations in the program, 8 are completed and operating. In the 2024–25 financial year, construction was completed on the Golden Square¹¹⁰ and Natte Yallock Fire Stations.¹¹¹

Contracts are in place for the remaining builds and are under the management of the Community Safety Building Authority. The delivery of replacement fire stations under this action will be progressed by the CFA and Community Safety Building Authority as part of BAU activities.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.2 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that CFA has completed the action's deliverables, noting this refers to contracts in place for the replacement stations and not station completion.

¹¹⁰ DJCS, 2025, Fire Services Reform Year Two to Five Implementation Plan Quarter 3. Unpublished.

¹¹¹ DJCS, 2025, Fire Services Reform Year Two to Five Implementation Plan Quarter 2. Unpublished.

Action 3.3

Descriptor	Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV
Objective	The transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	• Allocation Statement 1 – signed by the minister (September 2020) • Allocation Statement 2 – signed by the minister (February 2021) • Allocation Statement 3 – signed by the minister (March 2022) • Allocation Statement 4A (BA sets) – signed by the minister (September 2022) • Allocation Statement 4B • Allocation Statement 5 (new s103) – signed by the minister (April 2025) • Transfer Statement 1B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (June 2021) • Transfer Statement 2A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (June 2021) • Transfer Statement 2B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (June 2021) • Transfer Statement 3A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (June 2021) • Transfer Statement 3B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (June 2021) • Transfer Statement 3C – signed by the minister (January 2021) • Transfer Statement 6A – signed by the minister (May 2022) • Transfer Statement 6A1 – signed by the minister (May 2022) • Tools of Trade Agreement – signed by the minister (March 2021)
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted with residual work to transition to BAU
FSIM's assessment of progress	Partially completed

Progress summary

In the 2024–25 reporting period, there was one remaining deliverable to be completed under action 3.3: Allocation Statement 4B.

Allocation Statement 4B

During this reporting period, the CFA drafted Allocation Statement 4B to facilitate the transfer of remaining assets in co-located stations from the CFA to FRV. The completion date for this deliverable was extended from December 2024 to 30 June 2025 to give both agencies more time to resolve issues relating to shared spaces and confirming which property and assets should be transferred from the CFA to FRV.

We understand that sub-schedules for Dandenong, Melton and South Warrandyte are yet to be finalised, and additional allocation statements will be made to manage any outstanding assets.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.3 is partially completed. We have seen the CFA's acquittal report and understand that progress on Allocation Statement 4B will be transitioned to BAU.

Action 3.8

Descriptor	CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements
Objective	CFA's RTO obligations and requirements are satisfied by FRV training staff secondment protocols
Lead agency	CFA and FRV
Deliverables	- CFA to confirm to FRV RTO requirements and obligations relating to seconded instructors set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) - FRV to identify any gaps between CFA RTO & VRQA requirements and FRV ability to meet these requirements. CFA and FRV to identify agreed options to address these gaps - FRV to develop a roadmap of the joint CFA/FRV agreed actions required to meet CFA's RTO & VRQA requirements and any identified gaps
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted with residual work to transition to BAU (CFA) Acquitted (FRV)
FSIM's assessment of progress	Partially completed

Progress summary

CFA to confirm RTO requirements and obligations

The CFA and FRV reported to us that this deliverable is complete. We have sighted evidence of 2 pieces correspondence from the CFA to FRV confirming its RTO requirements and obligations.

FRV to complete gap analysis

This deliverable was progressed by the CFA and FRV through the FSOC Training Subcommittee. A plan was developed, outlining the CFA's and FRV's roles and responsibilities to:

- deliver a gap analysis to ensure seconded instructors meet the VRQA's standards for the CFA's RTO
- identify agreed options to address these gaps.

We have viewed FRV's gap analysis and observed that while it did consider trainer and assessor qualifications and identified there were no gaps from that perspective, it did not address the Child Safe Standards.

The CFA disputes FRV's findings in the gap analysis, contending that the conclusion does not address FRV secondees to the CFA, which risks the CFA's compliance with VRQA standards. We note both agencies acknowledge and support the Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirement for instructors in contact with children and young people under the age of 18 years and that work to progress the WWCC requirement is being addressed through the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group (JSWAG) under action 5.1.

While a gap analysis was completed by FRV, the contest on the findings prevented 'agreed options' to be developed, which was the second part of this deliverable.

FRV to develop a roadmap to meet requirements

The final deliverable for action 3.8 involved FRV producing a roadmap to support the agencies to meet the requirements found through the preceding gap analysis.

We viewed the roadmap developed by FRV, which was from the standpoint of continuous improvement. FRV's roadmap included a range of important RTO areas such as:

- instructor capability
- instructor supply and demand
- vocational education and training (VET) skills maintenance and professional development for instructors
- third-party agreements and the independent validation of such processes
- continuous improvement oversight responsibilities.

However, addressing Child Safe Standards were not part of the roadmap.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.8 is partially completed. We have viewed each agency's acquittal report for this action and note progression of this action will transition to BAU. The CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee (HoA) will retain ongoing oversight of the work, with any strategic issues escalated to the Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee (FSRSEC).

The CFA's RTO obligations are regulated by the VRQA. RTOs are required to comply with both the guidelines for VET providers and the Australian Quality Training Framework Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration (AQTF Standards). The guidelines were developed with reference to several regulatory standards for RTOs in Victoria, including the AQTF Standards.

Although not an exhaustive list of RTO obligations, we consider the following pertinent to the secondment arrangement of instructors between the agencies.

Guideline/Standard	Relevance
Guideline 3 – Trainer and assessor qualifications	Guideline 3 requires all trainers and assessors, including individuals working under the supervision of a trainer, to hold as a minimum:
AQTF Standard 1.4	• requisite training and/or assessment qualifications as listed under Schedule 1 of the Guidelines • vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed • current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided • current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment. These requirements are irrespective of whether a trainer and/or assessor is an employee of the CFA, or under a third-party arrangement such as a FRV secondee.

Guideline/Standard	Relevance
Guideline 6 – Child Safe Standards	Guideline 6 sets out conditions of registration for all RTOs that deliver, or intend to deliver, services to persons under 18 years of age, and requires such RTOs to comply with the Child Safe Standards made by the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services under s 17 of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i>. For the purpose of Guideline 6, services mean training, assessment and related educational and support services including student counselling, mediation or ICT support. Compliance requirements for Guideline 6 requires that the CFA has clear policies and procedures in place, enabled and supported by suitable governance and operational arrangements, which achieve the outcomes required for each Child Safe Standard and are appropriate for its student cohort and all premises where services are provided to persons under 18 years of age. The Commission for Children and Young People states that compliance with Child Safe Standard 6 requires an organisation, at a minimum, ensures relevant staff and volunteers have a current WWCC or equivalent background checks.¹¹²

Although we found that the first 2 deliverables were completed, we note the gap analysis did not fully accommodate the CFA's RTO obligations for FRV secondees delivering training and assessment services within the CFA's training environment.

We understand that the UFU does not support the introduction of WWCC as a mandatory role requirement for all FRV personnel seconded to the CFA. However, it is unequivocal that, as a minimum, VRQA requires all RTOs that deliver training to anyone under 18 years of age comply with the Child Safe Standards. Specifically, Child Safe Standard 6.2 states that an organisation must ensure relevant staff and volunteers have a current WWCC or equivalent background checks.

Notwithstanding, we have been advised that the CFA and FRV collaborated to develop a process for managing FRV secondees to the CFA who do not hold a valid WWCC. The agencies recommended that in such a situation, a panel of representatives from the CFA and FRV will review the secondment role to determine if modifications can be made to mitigate any risks for children and young people at the CFA or in the community. The agencies recommended that if the role cannot be modified, the seconded must return to their substantive role or be allocated alternative FRV duties.

We acknowledge that this issue is being addressed more broadly across all seconded roles under action 5.1 and encourage the fire agencies to continue working together closely as well as with other stakeholders including DJCS and the Commission for Children and Young People to resolve outstanding issues.

¹¹² Refer to the [Child Safe Standard 6](#) on the Commission for Children and Young People website.

Action 3.9

Descriptor	Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations
Objective	Fire agencies work collaboratively to operationalise complementary fire services arrangements
Lead agency	CFA and FRV
Deliverables	• A joint statement on complementary fire services • Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework (includes foundational agreements in place – Service Level Deed of Agreement (SLDA) and Secondment Agreement) • Service delivery plans. HoA agreed on 18 March 2024 to develop the following plans: ○ Fire Investigation – the current agreed schedules transition to a service delivery plan ○ Dangerous Goods ○ Fire Services Communications Controllers (FSCC) ○ Protective Equipment Services ○ Specialist Instructors ○ District Mechanical Officers (Fleet Services) ○ Use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre Campuses ○ Land Use Planning ○ Communications Technical Services / Tower Overseers ○ Structural Fire Safety / Building Environment – The Deed of Indemnity and Instruments of Delegation/Authorisation to be referenced in an overarching Service Delivery Plan. • Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management and review of agreements (via establishment of FSOC and HoA) • Secondment guidelines to be developed and approved by HoA • CFA and FRV to communicate within their agencies about the Fire Services Governance Framework and its constituent documents (as agreed)
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted with residual work to transition to BAU (CFA) Acquitted (FRV)
FSIM's assessment of progress	Partially completed

Progress summary

Joint statement on complementary fire services

The FSIM commented in the 2023–24 annual report that it was satisfied the CFA and FRV had a shared understanding of the definition and principles of complementary fire services and were using it to guide joint decision-making at the HoA and FSOC. This finding was based on the development of a joint statement on complementary fire services that was provided to the FSIM and in completion of this deliverable.

Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework

As noted in our 2023–24 annual report, the CFA and FRV developed a Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework (FSRDF) to support the operationalisation of the agreements being developed under action 3.9. The HoA endorsed the FSRDF during the previous reporting period, which enabled the schedules that underpinned SLDAs to be transitioned to service delivery plans (SDPs).

This action deliverable required the CFA and FRV to communicate the FSRDF in its respective agencies. As noted in FSIM's year 4 report, the CFA did this in April 2024 and we have seen evidence that FRV also communicated the framework to staff involved in developing the SDPs. We understand a joint communication between FRV and the CFA is being prepared to share the framework with the workforces of both agencies.

Service delivery plans

The table below lists the status of the 11 SDPs as at 30 June 2025.

Service delivery plans	Status as at 30 June 2025
Fleet Mechanical Services	100% complete
Fire Services Communication Controllers	60% complete
Communication Technicians	60% complete
Tower Overseers	100% complete
Dangerous Goods	5% complete
Land Use Planning	5% complete
Protective Equipment	25% complete
Structural Fire Safety	25% complete
Specialist Response Instructors	25% complete
Use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre Campuses	60% complete
Fire Investigation	100% complete

We understand work has progressed on the SDPs for fire services communication controllers, structural fire safety and the use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre campuses since the reporting period ended, bringing these plans closer to execution.

Specialist Instructors SDP

Since the last reporting period, the CFA and FRV agreed that a secondment arrangement for 3 specialist response instructors, provided at no cost to the CFA, would better address their needs and eliminate the need for an SDP for specialist instructing services. This option would also assist with addressing the complex RTO requirements FRV employees must meet to provide this service to the CFA.

We have viewed evidence provided by FRV that the Operations Consultative Committee considered this proposal in April 2025 and that it has since been referred to a subcommittee to progress.

Dangerous Goods and Land Use Planning SDPs

During this reporting period, the agencies could not resolve how dangerous goods and land use planning services should be delivered in country areas of Victoria (CAoV), which inhibited progress on these SDPs.

The Victorian Planning Provisions prevent the CFA from delegating functions and powers to FRV to process dangerous goods applications.

In relation to land use planning, the initial intent (as outlined in the SLDA) was for the CFA to retain the function within the CAoV and in FRV districts where referrals occurred within a bushfire management overlay. As a result of transferring primary resources (fire safety officers) to FRV in July 2020, an interim arrangement for FRV to undertake administrative and ancillary work on behalf of the CFA was agreed between the agencies. The CFA has a quality assurance role and final sign-off because, by law, the function and liability remain with the CFA.

The agencies will continue to progress this work after the reform period. We are satisfied the current governance arrangements will monitor the service delivery impacts of these SDPs being finalised during 2025–26. We encourage the CFA and FRV to document the current service delivery models for dangerous goods and land use planning to manage workforce impacts and update these plans as the SDPs are developed.

Structural Fire Safety SDP

The Structural Fire Safety SDP is near completion, with agencies close to reaching in-principle agreement. The SDP will then be provided to FRV's industrial partner for consultation.

Secondment guidelines

As noted in our 2023–24 annual report, the HoA also agreed to develop 6 secondment guidelines (previously referred to as supplementary instruments) to support the operationalisation of the Secondment Agreement. These secondment guidelines are:

- Additional Secondment Positions (already completed as a supplementary instrument)
- Authorisation of Expense Claims (already completed as a supplementary instrument)
- Relief Management
- Dispute and Grievance Management
- OHS Reporting and WorkSafe
- Professional Development.

During this reporting period, we saw evidence that the Operational Consultative Committee endorsed all 6 secondment guidelines, enabling their finalisation and readiness for execution, which was approved by the agencies at the HoA on 23 June 2025.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.9 is partially completed. We have viewed each agency's acquittal report for this action and note that outstanding SDPs will be transitioned to BAU activities.

Action 3.12

Descriptor	Develop agreements for corporate support functions between CFA and FRV that enable service delivery
Objective	CFA and FRV support service requirements are met through agreed and appropriate protocols and frameworks
Lead agency	CFA and FRV
Deliverables	• Develop and execute an Information Sharing MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements • Develop and execute a tenancy agreement • Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework • Prepare and agree to station sub-schedules and maps for outstanding co-located brigades (Melton, Dandenong and South Warrandyte)
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted with residual work to transition to BAU (CFA) Acquitted (FRV)
FSIM's assessment of progress	Partially completed

Progress summary

Develop and execute an Information Sharing MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements

The Information Sharing MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements was noted by FRV's Consultative Committee and executed by the CFA and FRV on 25 October 2024. We have viewed the MoU and agree this deliverable has been acquitted.

Prepare and agree to station sub-schedules and maps for outstanding co-located brigades

The station sub-schedules and maps for Dandenong, Melton and South Warrandyte were not finalised during the previous reporting period because of outstanding issues relating to shared spaces. Since July 2024, drafts of station sub-schedules and maps have been developed for all stations, with progress on these documents to continue after 30 June 2025.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.12 is partially completed. We have viewed each agency's acquittal report for this action and note that at the time of acquittal, the sub-schedules for Dandenong, Melton and South Warrandyte will be transitioned to BAU.

Priority Four: Valuing our people

Action 4.2

Descriptor	The Firefighters Registration Board establishes criteria and processes to support registration of suitably qualified secondees from FRV to CFA
Objective	Independent registration of secondees from FRV to CFA
Lead agency	FRB
Deliverables	- Formalise criteria to assess competencies and standards based on nationally endorsed training packages and products, and taking into consideration prescribed legislation, and relevant industrial instruments - Develop evidentiary threshold against which applicants will be assessed - Documented registration process - Commence operation of the registration scheme
Completion date	December 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

The purpose of the Firefighters Registration Scheme is to support the secondment arrangements outlined in the Fire Rescue Victoria Act by establishing criteria and processes to enable the secondment of staff between the CFA and FRV.

Building on the extensive consultation conducted in 2023–24 with FRV, Emergency Management Victoria and the CFA, in November 2024 the FRB developed professional competencies and the evidentiary threshold required to assess applicants. Along with a documented registration process, these steps acquitted deliverables 1, 2 and 3.

The FRB notified us that the registration scheme was formally launched in early December 2024, which acquitted deliverable 4, and that they had received 3 applications for inclusion on the Firefighters Register, of which 2 were assessed during the same period. The third application was received in June 2025 and assessed after 30 June 2025.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.2 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that FRB has completed the action's deliverables. We note the work of the FRB and that the administration of the scheme is now operating as BAU.

Action 4.3

Descriptor	Complete delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project
Objective	Through delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program, CFA volunteers are skilled and capable and feel safe and supported
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	• Deliver the Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial • Deliver the Wildfire PPC Project • Deliver the Safety Compliance Program (SCP)
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

Deliver the Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial

The Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial was completed in quarter 3 of 2024–25. Volunteer responses to the evaluation of the new equipment options trialled were included in a detailed report, which influenced the procurement approach.

The CFA has confirmed to us that the new masks resulting from this trial have been used in fire response situations.

Deliver the Wildfire PPC Project

In this reporting period, 12,699 residual New Generation Wildfire PPC sets were delivered to members, which completed the deliverable of manufacturing 24,000 PPC sets for distribution to volunteers by June 2025. The CFA has indicated that distributing wildfire PPC to its members has transitioned to BAU.

Deliver the Safety Compliance Program

The CFA advised us that the SCP is completed and has transitioned to BAU. Since inception, more than 2,900 members from 620 brigades have had Low Voltage Fuse Removal training, and more than 900 members from 138 brigades have had Safe Work at Heights training.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.3 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that the CFA has acquitted all deliverables.

Action 4.6

Descriptor	Develop the following documents to support inclusion and diversity across FRV: - Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan - Gender Equity Action Plan - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan
Objective	FRV promotes inclusion and diversity through fit for purpose strategies, plans and initiatives
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables	Finalised frameworks and action plans as outlined in the action description
Completion date	30 September 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan

The Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan supports FRV's commitment to an inclusive workplace. In April 2024 FRV's Executive Leadership team endorsed the final draft of the framework, which was subsequently presented to the Operations Consultative Committee for noting on 10 July 2024. The deliverable was considered complete following this presentation.

FRV has published its Diversity and Inclusion Framework on its website.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.6 is completed. FRV formally acquitted this action on 30 September 2024. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that FRV has completed the action's deliverables.

FRV's No Ordinary Job firefighting recruitment campaign included targeted initiatives to engage priority diversity groups (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) in 2024. The recruitment drive aimed to fill 240 positions in 8 recruit courses starting training at the FRV Academy from July 2025. FRV has indicated this will continue into future firefighter recruitment campaigns.

FRV has also said that, on advice from Reconciliation Australia and FRV's Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Group, it continues to prioritise completing and embedding foundational actions in the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2022–2024¹¹³ (RAP) ahead of developing its next FRV Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan for launch by June 2026.

¹¹³ FRV, [Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan December 2022–24](#)

FRV also completed a review of available data and identified a range of initiatives that seek to increase the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of the launch and implementation of FRV's RAP. FRV gave us key insights into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment as at November 2024:

- 1.2% of the total recruit candidate pool (on average) are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (79 in 2024).
- 46% of candidates withdrew before sitting the written selection test (in 2024). This includes candidates who had booked and paid but didn't attend.
- 54% of candidates did not pass the group selection stage (compared with 34% of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates) in 2024.
- ~1% of recruit firefighter course participants (on average) are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Less than 0.5% of FRV employees are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

FRV also gave us its proposed framework for improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention and advised the framework would be implemented as part of its next recruitment campaign.

FRV reported the following results in quarter 4 of 2024-25 against its Outcomes Framework under outcome 3.2: *A diverse and inclusive organisation*:¹¹⁴

Reconciliation action plan

- 79% of initiatives completed. FRV noted that during 2024–25:
 - The first Aboriginal engagement officer was appointed to support the attraction, recruitment and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - The Aboriginal Engagement and Cultural Protocol Guide was launched.
 - Learning sessions were delivered to recognise National Reconciliation Week.

¹¹⁴ FRV, Outcomes Framework Progress Report Q4 FY 2024/25.

Action 4.9

Descriptor	Develop a recruitment strategy and campaign to support increased gender diversity across all firefighting ranks. Review the recruitment process, training, and promotional pathways to ensure they support the retention of a gender diverse workforce
Objective	To embed a recruitment and retention strategy that supports the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables	• Ensure recruitment activities are delivered in a way that attracts a diverse range of applicants • Commence a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies • Introduce Women Support Coordinators (Women's Support Project) to support the identification and resolution of barriers to increasing the number of women firefighters
Completion date	December 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

Ensure recruitment activities are delivered in a way that attracts a diverse range of applicants

FRV's 'No Ordinary Job' campaign was publicly announced on 27 May 2024 through a media release on radio, social media and other FRV channels to encourage firefighter recruitment from diverse groups, including women. In 2024–25, FRV delivered 4 in-person 'women in firefighting' attraction workshops, attended by more than 240 women.

FRV ran this recruitment campaign from 1 July 2024 to 8 July 2024. FRV received 4,043 applications, of which 16.6% were from women.

The number of women operational staff in 2024–25 remained at 230 of 4,081 employees (5.6%). This figure covers all women employees on the operational agreement including operational roles that fall outside of the firefighter rank structure (such as instructors, community safety managers and FSCCs).

In terms of women firefighters within the rank structure, as at 30 June 2025 FRV had 221 women firefighters across all ranks. The retention rate of women firefighters across all ranks is 98.5%, and the 12-month turnover rate for operational women reported in FRV's quarter 4 2024–25 outcome report is 1.44%.

This deliverable is completed.

Commence a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies

FRV undertook a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies, which concluded in quarter 3 of 2024–25. Findings and recommendations will inform future campaign strategies.

We note that FRV reviewed the impact of the 2024 No Ordinary Job firefighting recruitment campaign¹¹⁵ strategies for effectiveness in attracting women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. FRV has now surpassed 200 women firefighters. We understand the progress of these women at each recruitment state will be tracked so potential barriers or opportunities can be identified and managed.

We also note that as part of FRV's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, FRV has completed a review of available data and identified a range of initiatives that seek to increase the attraction and recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These initiatives will be implemented as part of the 2025 recruitment campaign.

This deliverable is completed.

Introduce Women Support Coordinators (Women's Support Project) to support the identification and resolution of barriers to increasing the number of women firefighters

We have seen FRV's Women's Support Coordinators (Women's Support Project) poster, which advertised the project in 2020. We understand this project continues to deliver initiatives to promote the attraction, recruitment and retention of women firefighters.

This deliverable is completed.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.9 is completed. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that FRV has completed the action's deliverables.

We note that the initiatives FRV delivered to attract, recruit and retain women firefighters will continue under BAU. FRV identified in its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2025–32¹¹⁶ and its Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–25¹¹⁷ the increasing gender and diversity across all firefighting ranks and corporate and technical roles.

FRV reported the following results in quarter 4 of 2024–25 against its Outcomes Framework under outcome 3.2: *A diverse and inclusive organisation*:¹¹⁸

Women firefighters

- Women firefighter applicants as a proportion of all applicants in 2024–25 remained at 671 applicants (16.6%). FRV noted the steady increase in proportion of women successfully recruited despite the overall number of women applicants decreasing slightly over the years.
- Women firefighter recruits as a proportion of all recruits in 2024–25 increased to 15 recruits (12.5%). FRV noted an increase in overall representation of women as recruit firefighters compared with previous years, though the number of women recruited was slightly less compared with 2023–24 but higher than 2021–22 and 2022–23.
- Successful recruitment and retention of women firefighter recruits in 2024–25 remained at 15 recruits and zero exits after 12 months (100% retention).

¹¹⁵ Refer to the [FRV website](#).

¹¹⁶ FRV, [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2025–32](#).

¹¹⁷ FRV, [Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–25](#).

¹¹⁸ FRV Outcomes Framework Progress Report Q4 FY 2024/25.

Women in leadership roles

- The number of women firefighters in leadership roles increased slightly to 27 (actual number) compared with quarter 4 of 2023–24 due to promoting some women from the position of leading firefighter to station officer during the reporting year.
- The proportion of women in operational leadership roles (as a proportion of all women operational staff) remained at 12.56%.

Women in corporate and technical roles

- The number of women corporate and technical employees in 2024–25 increased to 413 of 798 employees (51.8%).

Priority Five: Ensure the future sustainability of fire services

Action 5.1

Descriptor	Capability and capacity requirements of the seconded workforce to deliver an effective CFA are clearly articulated by CFA, and FRV establishes a roadmap to deliver on these requirements in alignment with the legislative obligations of both organisations
Objective	CFA's seconded operational requirements are clearly communicated, inform workforce planning by FRV and CFA and FRV work collaboratively to address any gaps
Lead agency	CFA and FRV
Deliverables	• CFA Capability Statement • Gaps analysis and options to address these gaps are identified • FRV to establish a roadmap to incorporate the capability and capacity requirements in line with the CFA Capability Statement of the seconded workforce into workforce planning
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted with residual work to transition to BAU (CFA) Acquitted (FRV)
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

CFA Capability Statement

During this reporting period, the CFA provided FRV with the assistant chief fire officer (ACFO) regional commander success profile in September 2024 and the ACFO community safety manager success profile in November 2024. These formed part of the periodic updates to its CFA Capability Statement, which was originally provided to FRV in 2022. We understand FRV still requires extra capability and capacity data from the CFA but that the information provided in September and November 2024 was sufficient to consider this deliverable completed.

FRV advised us that it has 2 areas of concern in the CFA's Capability Statement. The first was the alignment of required skills for instructors against the current instructor position descriptions. The second was the overall quantity (capacity) of incident management team (IMT) roles required by the CFA.

IMT roles are not mandatory and are entered into voluntarily. Agencies cannot enforce the requirements to undertake training in an IMT role, with both agencies having agreed the overall capacity of IMT roles was aspirational in number given the long lead time to get people through the IMT pathway and accredited as incident controllers at the different levels.

Gaps and options to address these gaps are identified

FRV reviewed the CFA Capability Statement and developed the draft roadmap for the CFA to comment on. We note that both agencies agree the gap analysis has been drafted, but there is a difference in opinion on the findings. Both agencies acknowledge more work is required.

FRV to establish a roadmap to incorporate the capability and capacity requirements in line with the CFA Capability Statement of the seconded workforce into workforce planning

During quarter 3, FRV drafted a roadmap. We saw evidence where FRV proposed the gap analysis and roadmap initially focused on technical skills and training requirements, with a second phase of roadmap development to occur on the soft skills requirements outlined in the CFA Capability Statement.

Working with Children Checks

The issue of child safety requirements for FRV employees seconded to the CFA has progressed during this reporting period. In January 2025 the HoA agreed that the WWCC working group would report through JSWAG, and 2 updates have been provided to the HoA. Progress has included FRV's Executive Leadership team approving the WWCC requirement, child safety statement and training and induction in November 2024 and tabling these documents at FRV's Operational Consultative Committee in December 2024.

FRV and the CFA worked together to develop a process for managing FRV secondees to the CFA who cannot get a WWCC. The agencies recommended that when this situation occurs, a panel of representatives from FRV and the CFA will review the secondment role to determine if modifications can be made to mitigate any risks for children and young people at the CFA or in the community. The agencies recommended that if the role cannot be modified, the secondee must return to their substantive role or be allocated alternative FRV duties.

We understand that the UFU does not support introducing the WWCC as a mandatory role requirement for all FRV secondees to the CFA and note that FRV is progressing a dispute with the UFU on this matter through the Fair Work Commission.

FSIM's findings

Action 5.1 is completed. We have viewed each agency's acquittal report for this action and note progression of this action will transition to BAU. We are cognisant of the keen intersection between actions 5.1 and 3.8, and expect the continuing work of this action under BAU to address the specific areas of concern regarding seconded instructors under action 3.8. The HoA will retain ongoing oversight of the work, with any strategic issues escalated to FSRSEC.

Action 5.2

Descriptor	DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks
Objective	The fire services have awareness of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity which will inform future service delivery requirements
Lead agency	DJCS
Deliverables	• CFA and FRV review current state capability and capacity for functions and services delivered • CFA and FRV undertake a high-level assessment of gaps to meet current service delivery requirements • DJCS prepare a final report consolidating findings from deliverables 1 and 2
Completion date	November 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2025	Acquitted
FSIM's assessment of progress	Completed

Progress summary

The DJCS-led review was compiled to inform future government investment decisions for the long-term financial sustainability of the CFA and FRV.

In 2024–25 the CFA and FRV both completed internal reviews of their agencies to identify any gaps in their service delivery functions. Coordinated by DJCS, the CFA and FRV undertook the detailed work in 2023–24, and the review reports were completed in October 2024, acquitting the first 2 deliverables for this action.

DJCS prepared a report for the FSIM on action 5.2 that incorporated the CFA and FRV analysis, information and advice from deliverables 1 and 2. DJCS will continue to work with fire services agencies on matters where required, while the FSRSEC and the governance bodies of the CFA and FRV will remain engaged in reform-related matters connected to the findings of the review.

FSIM's findings

Action 5.2 is completed. DJCS, with input from the CFA and FRV, has formally acquitted this action. We have seen the acquittal report for this action and are satisfied that DJCS has completed the action's deliverables.

Abbreviations used in this report

Abbreviated term	Title
ACFO	assistant chief fire officer
BAU	business as usual
CAoV	country area of Victoria
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CSBA	Community Safety Building Authority
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
EA	enterprise agreement
FIRS	Fire Information Reporting System
FRB	Firefighters Registration Board
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
FSIM	Fire Services Implementation Monitor
FSOC	Fire Services Operational Committee
FSR	fire services reform
FSRSEC	Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee
GFF	General Firefighter
HoA	CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee
ICT	information and communications technology
JSWAG	Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group
MoU	memorandum of understanding
PPC	personal protective clothing
RTO	registered training organisation
SDP	service delivery plans
SLDA	Service Level Deed of Agreement

Abbreviated term	Title
UFU	United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VFBV	Volunteers Fire Brigades Victoria
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
WWCC	Working with Children Check



Fire Services Implementation Monitor