



CAVFA

Council of Australian
Volunteer Fire
Associations

2017

**VOLUNTEER
WELFARE AND
EFFICIENCY
SURVEY**

National Report
Volunteer Fire Services

Endorsed by the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATIONS (CAVFA)

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Australian Capital Territory

ACTVBA ACT Volunteer Brigades Association

New South Wales

RFSA NSW Rural Fire Service Association*

Northern Territory

NTBVA NT Bushfire Volunteers Association

Queensland

RFBAQ Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland*

QAFA Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association

South Australia

CFSVA Country Fire Service Volunteers Association*

Tasmania

TVFBA Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association*

TRVFA Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association

Victoria

VFBV Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria*

Western Australia

AVBFB Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades of WA

VFRSA Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services Association of WA*

* denotes Associations that participated in the 2017 Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey

6,474 SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



The Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations' representatives would like to thank their member associations and the 6,474 fire service volunteers who participated in the second national Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey.

CAVFA would like to thank Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria for undertaking the project of delivering the survey and analysis of results to Volunteer Fire Associations across Australia.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2017 Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey attracted responses from 6,474 fire service volunteers from across the country. This was the second time that the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey has been run nationally for fire service volunteers. The first survey in 2016 attracted 6,136 respondents.

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is based on the original Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey established in 2012 by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV). The initial survey tool and system were designed and developed by volunteers, for volunteers and identified key themes that affect volunteer welfare and efficiency. These themes form the basis for this report.

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey measures the **Gap** between what volunteers expect, and how close or far those expectations are from being met.

Volunteers' expectations are closest to being met at their local brigade level. The areas of the survey that focus on Recruitment and Retention and People Management at a brigade level are identified as having small **Gaps** between volunteer expectations and performance – a result that is consistent for all fire service agencies. Survey results are clear in showing that volunteers feel that their brigades are volunteer-friendly and welcoming to new volunteers. The results indicate that volunteers feel it is very important to support equity and diversity within their brigade, and they think this is what is happening.

Supporting the positive culture, the survey results show that bullying is unlikely to be tolerated within brigades.

Volunteers' expectations are furthest from being met in the area of consultation and being involved in decision making at a Corporate, and also Regional level. This should be considered a priority focus area, as it is evident that volunteers are feeling dissatisfied with performance in this area.

Training is another key area where there needs to be priority attention directed, as there is a large **Gap** between volunteer expectations and actual performance, particularly relating to the format, time and location of training provided to volunteers.

It is evident that fire service volunteers would like to see more opportunities for training in the areas of people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.

VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION

- 83% of respondents to the survey indicated they are satisfied with their volunteer role
- 86% of respondents indicated they intend to continue in their volunteer role
- 83% would recommend being a fire service volunteer to others.

By contrast, the average across the industry for volunteers being satisfied with how they are treated by their agency, was at a low 64%.

WHY BE A FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER?

Overwhelmingly, fire services volunteers do what they do for two main reasons:

- to help protect the community they live in, or
- for a sense of fulfilment in supporting their community in a meaningful way.

METHODOLOGY

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is an initiative of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), the volunteer association formally established in the CFA Act to represent CFA volunteers in Victoria. The initial survey tool was developed and designed by volunteers, for volunteers, and launched in Victoria in 2012.

In 2016, the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA) endorsed an expansion of VFBV's Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey and fire service volunteers across Australia were given the opportunity to participate. In 2017, the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was again offered to fire service volunteers across the country. The survey is offered to volunteers through their respective state level volunteer association. The volunteer associations then work both independently and collectively in providing the results to key stakeholders both within and beyond each fire service, and more broadly across each State, Territory or at a national level.

The survey is a reputable tool which provides evidence based, quantitative and qualitative information on matters of importance to volunteers. Expansion of the survey across Australia provides a valuable opportunity to harness direct feedback from volunteers and gain an understanding of what issues are shared amongst fire service volunteers right around the country and work on matters of significance on behalf of the entire fire services volunteering population.

The national survey results provide CAVFA with the ability to discuss, influence and advocate about the views of fire service volunteers across the states. The results provide the emergency management sector, governments and fire services with a direct volunteer perspective. Identifying common themes across the county will facilitate the sharing of good practice, new learnings and initiatives which improve volunteer satisfaction.

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey contains a series of statements identified as being critical to volunteer welfare and efficiency. These statements form the core of the survey.

The statements are grouped into seven key themes listed below. The majority of the reporting is in line with these themes.

SEVEN KEY THEMES

1

Respect & Professionalism

2

My Role as a Volunteer

3

Cooperation across [Agency]

4

Support from [Agency]

5

Training by [Agency]

6

Recruitment & Retention

7

People Management – My Brigade

SURVEY PROMOTION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey for fire service volunteers was open to participants during September and October 2017. The methods used to communicate, distribute, promote and engage volunteers to participate in the survey was determined by each volunteer association.

Methods used to engage volunteers included: email distribution lists (where available), allowing the survey to be sent directly to volunteers where they could complete the survey via a securely encrypted electronic record system; newsletters; social media; and, other communication distribution channels to promote the survey. Communiques usually included access to a link which allowed the survey to be completed via the securely encrypted electronic record system.

Processes were employed to block or limit the opportunity for an individual to complete the survey multiple times and measures were taken to de-duplicate respondents and verify respondent's eligibility as a fire service volunteer. A review of survey controls by an independent, specialist data analysis consultancy confirmed that additional measures to further control survey respondent identification were not warranted and would be "detrimental to the stated goals of inclusion and providing an independent voice to the volunteers".¹

SURVEY REPRESENTATION

Respondents could be anonymous or potentially identifiable. Potentially identifiable being those respondents who left contact details, enabling their volunteer status to be verified. The purpose of allowing identification was to allow for the ability to verify results as being that of the appropriate volunteer population.

Methods used to verify results include ensuring the demographics of the respondents align overall with the demographics of the relevant fire service and/or comparing the results from anonymous respondents with those who could be verified and determining if there were any anomalies in the data which could suggest intention to manipulate the survey results.

It is considered that any 'falsified' records would be in the minority and there is no suggestion of bias in any of the surveys.

DATA RELIABILITY

The large number of respondents provide a measure of confidence that the results are likely to be near that of the overall population. At a State level, the percentage and participation for each fire service varied. For the purpose of this report, the total results for each fire service contributed to the average – a method used to avoid the fire services with a higher response level having a greater influence in the overall results.

The results indicate similar views, regardless of which fire service a volunteer is a member with, indicating a high level of reliability in the outcome of the survey.

PARTICIPANTS

This report summarises the feedback from 6,474 fire service volunteers from across Australia. All States were represented with only the ACT and NT not participating in either the 2016 and 2017 Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Surveys.

In 2017, volunteers participated from the following fire service agencies:

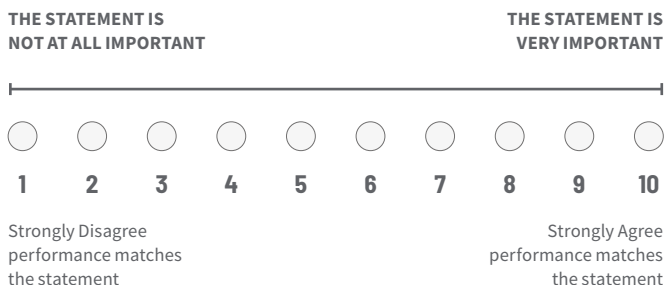
- Country Fire Authority – Victoria
- Country Fire Service – South Australia
- Rural Fire Service – New South Wales
- Rural Fire Service – Queensland
- Tasmania Fire Service – volunteer brigades
- Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service – Western Australia

1. In 2017, VFVB engaged independent data analyst specialists, Symbolix, to undertake an audit of the survey instrument, access controls, representation and integrity of the findings.

THE VOLUNTEER WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY LEVEL (VoIWEL)

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey instrument (Survey Monkey) uses a Likert scale (a scale used to represent people’s attitudes to a topic) of 1 to 10 for the **Importance** that a particular factor represents for the respondent, and then the respondent’s view of **Performance** of that particular factor.

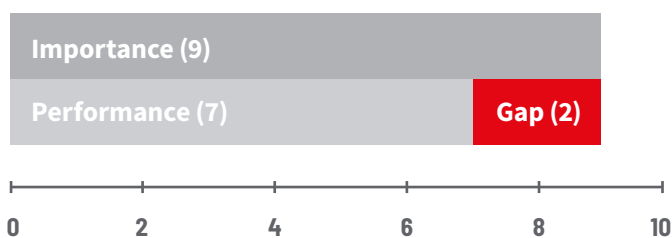


DETERMINING THE GAP AND VoIWEL OUTCOME

The relative measure of how closely performance meets the expectation of importance, is referred to as the **Gap**. The **Gap** is then identified on a scale of ‘meeting expectations’ through to a ‘critical need for urgent attention’.

The illustration (right) demonstrates the calculation of the **Gap** derived for each statement, which is then averaged to provide the **Gap** for each theme.

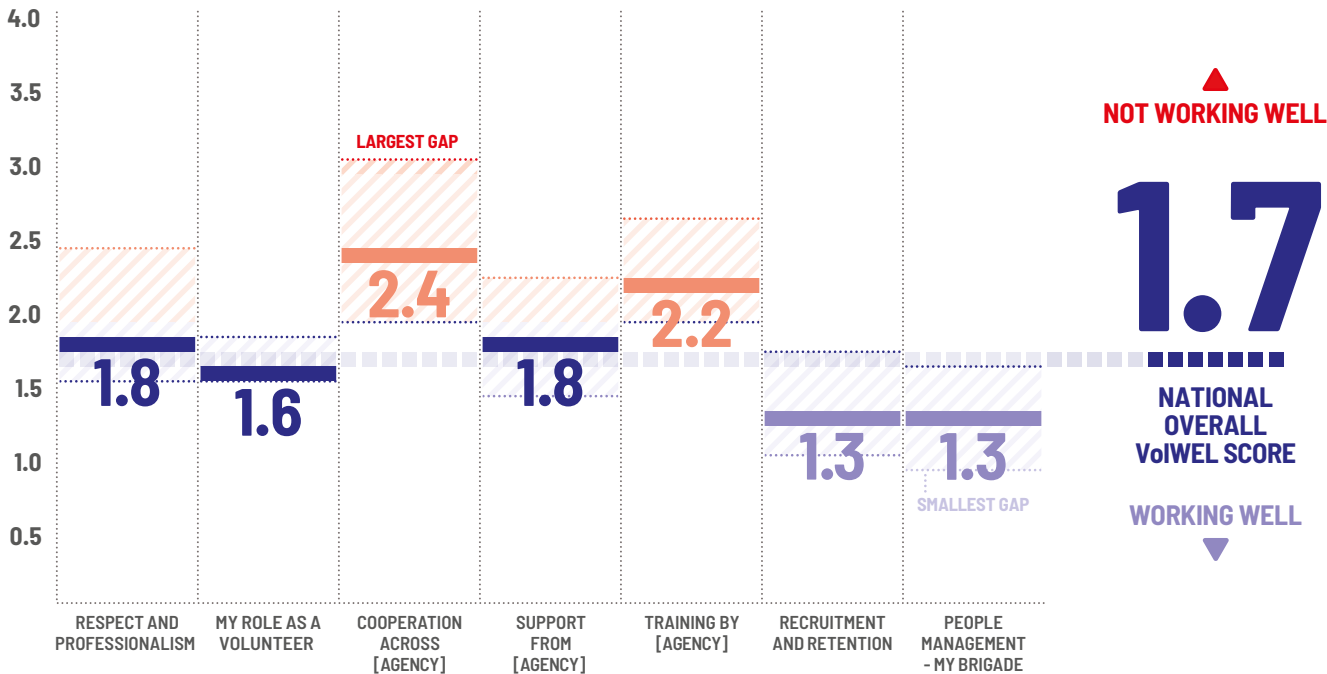
This **Gap** then determines the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Level (VoIWEL) in a way that is easy to interpret and understand. A high VoIWEL outcome is a sign things are not working well and that volunteer expectations are furthest from being met. A low VoIWEL outcome is a good sign that things are working well and indicates volunteer expectations are being met or closer to being met.



VOLUNTEER WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY LEVEL – DESCRIPTORS

>3.0	Critical need for priority attention	A Gap of 3.0 or more indicates that there is a critical gap between volunteer expectations and performance and volunteers are highly dissatisfied. Priority attention is needed.
2.5 – 2.9	Significant Gap – immediate attention required	A Gap between 2.5 and 2.9 indicates that there are significant issues that need to be addressed. Immediate action should be put in place to rectify areas of concern.
2.0 – 2.4	Large Gap – remedial action to be taken	A Gap between 2.0 and 2.4 indicates these issues are impacting volunteer welfare and efficiency and will be causing dissatisfaction with the volunteering experience. Action to address volunteer concerns should be implemented.
1.5 – 1.9	Mid-range Gap – need for improvement	A Gap between 1.5 and 1.9 indicates that volunteer expectations are not being met and should be addressed in both action and strategic plans, in the shorter term. Volunteers are indicating lower levels of satisfaction.
1.0 – 1.4	Small Gap – potential for improvement	A Gap between 1.0 and 1.4 indicates that longer term planning should include addressing volunteer concerns. Volunteers are reasonably satisfied.
<0.9	Meeting Expectations	A Gap of less than 1.0 indicates that on the whole, volunteer expectations are being met. This would be evidence of a high level of satisfaction throughout the volunteer population.

VoIWEL OUTCOME - AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICES



Note: Range depicted on illustration is indicative of the results for each individual agency.

The **Gap** provides the true indication of how well volunteer expectations are being met. Translated as the VoIWEL, the outcome shows clearly where agencies are meeting the expectations of volunteers, and where there are areas which should be prioritised to address volunteer concerns.

The National Fire Service overall VoIWEL score of **1.7** represents a need to address volunteer concerns through both action and strategic plans. Beyond the overall National Fire Service VoIWEL outcome, within each agency's results there may be poorer or better VoIWEL outcomes.

All agencies have the best results for Recruitment and Retention and People Management at brigade level and worse results for Training and agency level Cooperation.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

PARTICIPATION

- 6,474 fire service volunteers participated in the 2017 survey, compared with 6,136 respondents in 2016.
- In most fire services, there was increased participation in the survey when compared to 2016.

OVERALL RESULTS

- Whilst individual results in relation to the VolWEL outcome varied, what was consistent was the ranking of where volunteer expectations were being met, and where there was a large gap between expectations and performance.
- Results are largely consistent with the outcome of the 2016 Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey.
- It is clear that fire service volunteers are least satisfied in areas which are the responsibility of the corporate level of their agency.
- Volunteers are most satisfied with performance where the responsibility lies with the local brigade.

The VolWEL outcome has improved for the following themes:

- Respect and Professionalism
- My Role as a Volunteer
- Cooperation Across [Agency]
- Support from [Agency]
- Training by [Agency]

The VolWEL outcome remains the same for:

- Recruitment and Retention
- People Management – My Brigade

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS?

Consistently, the statements in the survey are ranked as being at least 8 out of 10, when asked how important the matter is to volunteer welfare and efficiency.

As well as being where volunteer expectations are closest to being met, it is clearly evident, that what happens at brigade level has the most impact on volunteer satisfaction, and matters of welfare and efficiency. Statements in the themes which relate to predominantly brigade level activity and authority often rated at 9 or above out of 10 as to how important they are.

Specifically, the areas which are most important to volunteer welfare and efficiency, are identified as:

- No tolerance for bullying – including the fire service actively working to discourage bullying behaviour
- No barriers to the roles women can occupy
- The environment at brigades needs to be volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and have good morale
- People from all cultural backgrounds, religious, political and personal beliefs are all made welcome
- Volunteer leaders need to be effectively supported and empowered to manage their brigade and undertake their roles
- New volunteers need to be actively supported to allow them to turn out to incident within a reasonable time of joining
- The environment across the wider fire service should be volunteer-friendly and welcoming to new members
- Volunteers are to be effectively consulted and involved in decision making within their brigade.

WHICH EXPECTATIONS ARE CLOSEST TO BEING MET?

- ▶ Each of the statements where fire service volunteer's expectations are closest to being met come from the **People Management – My Brigade** and **Recruitment and Retention** themes.

These two themes have the better VolWEL outcomes. Overall, the results indicate that fire service volunteer expectations are closest to being met at their brigade level. Specifically, the best results came from the following statements:

- ▶ There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy in my brigade.
- ▶ People from all cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs are made welcome at my brigade.
- ▶ The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale.
- ▶ I feel the time I devote to [agency] is productive and worthwhile.
- ▶ New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining the brigade.
- ▶ Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at brigade level.
- ▶ New volunteers in non-response roles are actively supported to allow them to contribute in my brigade within a reasonable time of joining.
- ▶ Workplace bullying is not tolerated in brigade of which I have been a member.



**A VolWEL outcome
of less than 1.5**

WHERE DOES PRIORITY ACTION NEED TO BE TAKEN?

- ▶ Fire service volunteers expectations are furthest from being met in areas that are the responsibility of the corporate levels of their agency.

The four questions to the right come from the survey's **Cooperation Across [Agency]** and **Training by [Agency]** themes. The VolWEL outcome for both these themes are poor, as they showed the largest Gaps between volunteer expectations and performance. Specifically, the worse results came from the following statements:

- ▶ Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at [agency] corporate level.
- ▶ [Agency] provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.
- ▶ Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at local District/Regional level.
- ▶ [Agency] provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.



**A VolWEL outcome
of 2.2 or more**

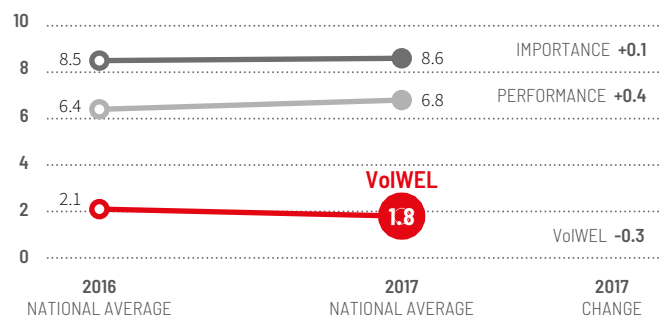
THEMES AND TRENDS

Below are the results for each of the survey themes showing a comparison between the results for 2016 and 2017.

A smaller **Gap** (better VolWEL outcome) indicates a positive result. A larger **Gap** (poorer VolWEL outcome) is indicative of worse results when comparing the results between the two years.

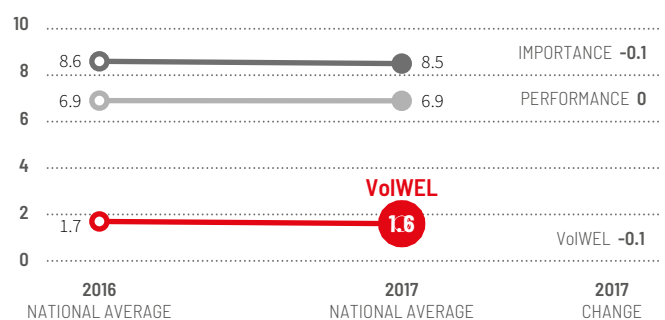
RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM

- Q:** I respect and appreciate the efforts made by [agency] to support me as a volunteer.
- Q:** The respect and value of the contribution of volunteers is evident in [agency's] actions and culture.
- Q:** In general, [agency] staff accept and recognise the professionalism of volunteers.
- Q:** [Agency] consistently and proactively promotes public understanding of community confidence in the role and professionalism of [agency] volunteers and their brigades.



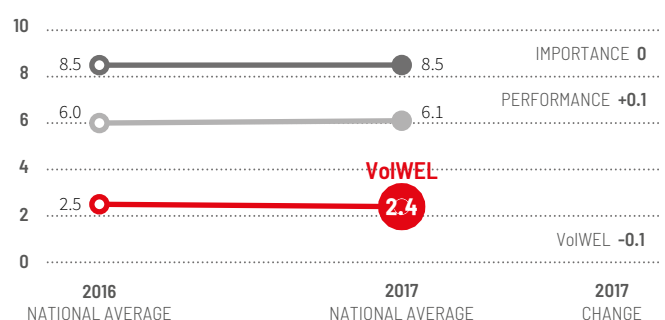
MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

- Q:** I feel the time I devote to [agency] is productive and worthwhile.
- Q:** [Agency] is doing everything it can to facilitate a good balance between my service and time commitment as a volunteer and other parts of my life.
- Q:** Volunteers who no longer wish to perform operational roles are supported to continue their volunteer service in other non-operational/operational support roles in a positive and supportive way.
- Q:** [Agency] recognises and utilises the skills and experience that I bring to [agency].
- Q:** [Agency] proactively provide opportunities for me to progress and develop my skills to more senior/diverse roles as part of an individual volunteer career pathway.



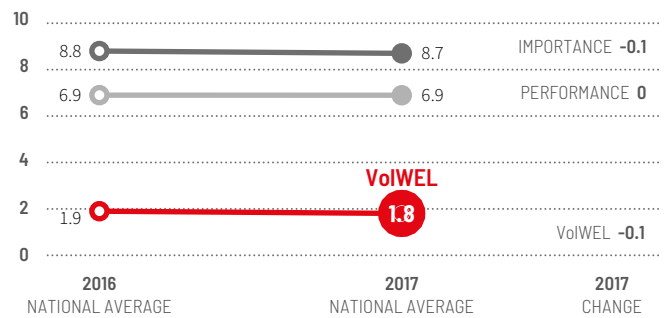
COOPERATION ACROSS [AGENCY]

- Q:** Volunteers and paid staff work cooperatively at all levels to achieve shared goals and serve the community.
- Q:** [Agency's] workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.
- Q:** Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my local District/Regional level.
- Q:** Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at [agency] Corporate level.



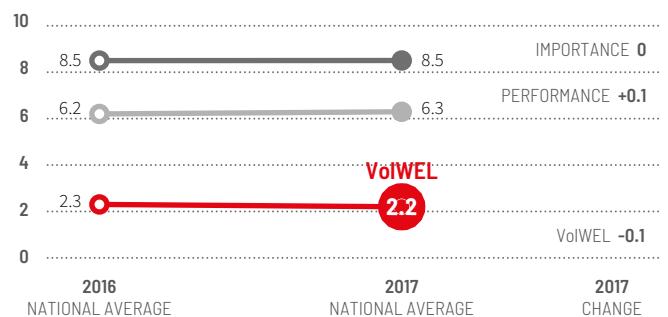
SUPPORT FROM [AGENCY]

- Q:** [Agency's] corporate policies and leadership supports an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation.
- Q:** [Agency] works actively to discourage workplace bullying.
- Q:** My employer is effectively recognised and supported to release me to undertake my volunteer commitments.
- Q:** [Agency's] paid personnel in my local brigade/district area are committed to supporting and empowering volunteers.
- Q:** Volunteer leaders in my brigade are effectively supported and empowered to manage my brigade and undertake their roles.



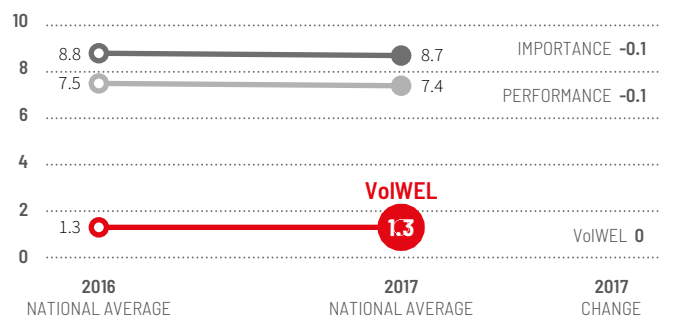
TRAINING BY [AGENCY]

- Q:** [Agency] provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.
- Q:** Most training is available and provided within a reasonable distance from my brigade.
- Q:** [Agency] provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.



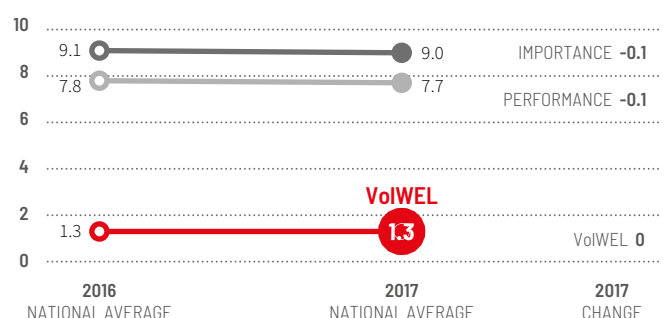
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Q:** My brigade is successful in 'recruiting' younger people as volunteers.
- Q:** My brigade is successful in 'retaining' younger people as volunteers.
- Q:** People from all cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs are all made welcome at my brigade.
- Q:** There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy in my brigade.
- Q:** New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining the brigade.
- Q:** The environment across the wider [agency] is volunteer-friendly and welcoming to new members.
- Q:** New volunteers in non-response roles are actively supported to allow them to contribute in my brigade within a reasonable time of joining.



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE

- Q:** My brigade leaders are able to deal effectively with human resource, conflict resolution and morale issues at brigade level.
- Q:** Workplace bullying is not tolerated in brigades of which I have been a member.
- Q:** People management issues, conflict resolution and volunteer morale are generally well managed within my brigade.
- Q:** The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale.
- Q:** Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my brigade level.



DEMOGRAPHICS

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Participants were asked to provide demographic information, such as their age bracket, gender and length of service with their agency, to enable agencies to identify if different cohorts held particular views.

If a cohort was large enough to ensure individual volunteers could not be identified, the results for each cohort has been provided to agencies. Commentary in this report relates to consistent views across all fire services.

GENDER

There were similar gender profiles for the respondents across each of the fire services. Gender category options in the survey included: female, male, transgender, prefer not to say and other. The reported demographics for gender is limited to female and male as responses in the other categories was small enough that it could potentially identify the respondents.

AGE

Most age groups were well represented amongst the respondents, with the exception of younger volunteer cohorts. This could also be reflected in the survey results that indicate that the recruitment and retention of younger volunteers is an issue for some fire services, and an area that needs to improve.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

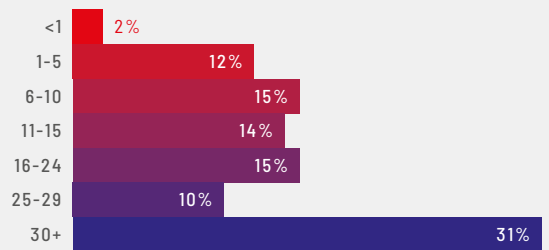
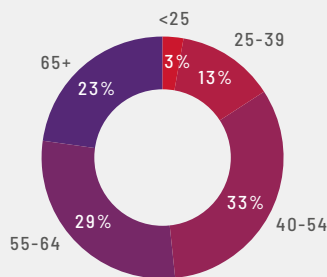
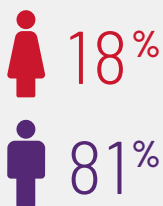
There was consistency across the fire services in relation to the length of service of respondents to the survey. It is common across all fire services that scoring for performance decreased as length of service increased. This was especially evident after one year of service.

GENDER

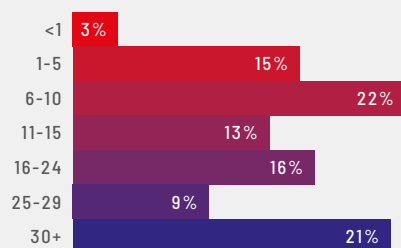
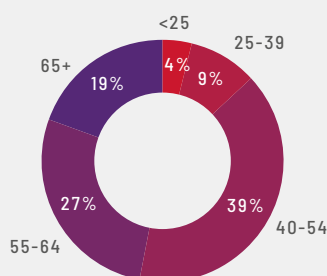
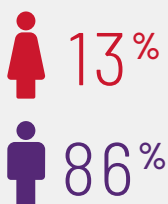
AGE (YEARS)

LENGTH OF SERVICE (YEARS)

CFA - VICTORIA



CFS - SOUTH AUSTRALIA

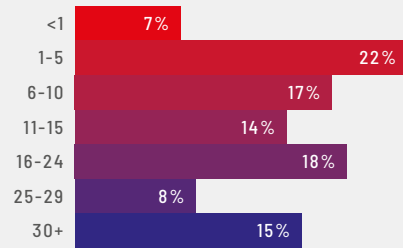
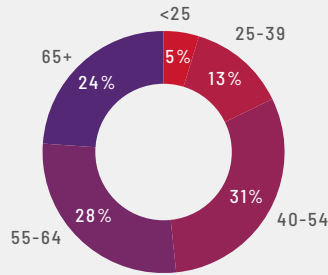


GENDER

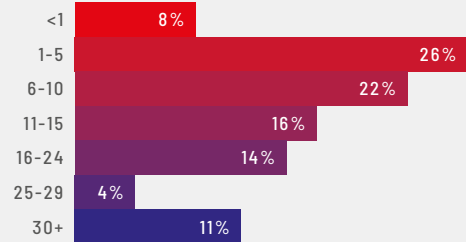
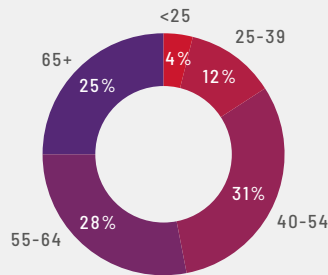
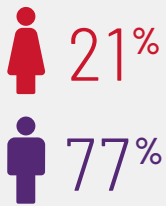
AGE (YEARS)

LENGTH OF SERVICE (YEARS)

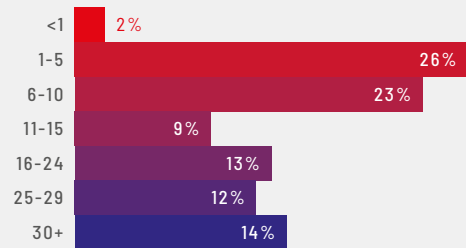
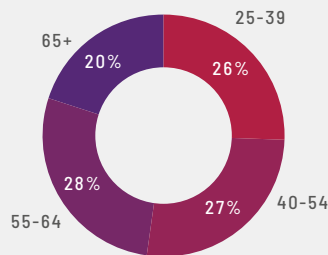
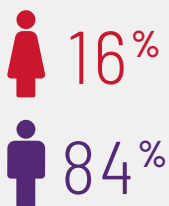
RFS - NEW SOUTH WALES



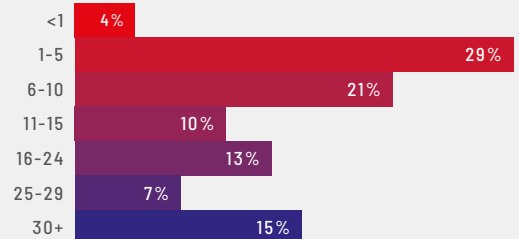
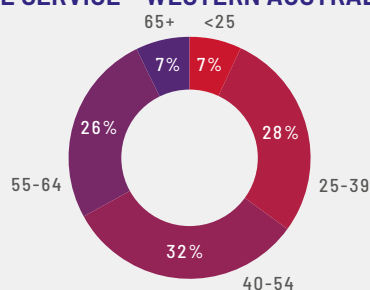
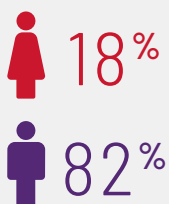
RFSQ - QUEENSLAND



TFS - VOLUNTEER BRIGADES - TASMANIA



VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - WESTERN AUSTRALIA



SATISFACTION

OBSERVATIONS

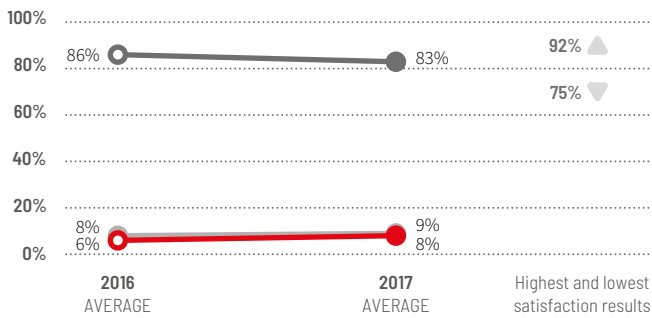
- ▶ There appears a consistency between the satisfaction of volunteers in their role (83%) with the number that intend to continue (86%) and those who would recommend being a fire service volunteer to others (83%).
- ▶ There seems little or no correlation with how volunteers feel about the way they are treated by their fire service – as the satisfaction in this area is much lower at only (64%).
- ▶ As it is brigade level activities which are most important to volunteer welfare and efficiency, the low satisfaction rates with how volunteers feel about the way their fire service treats them seems to have less impact on the overall satisfaction with their volunteer role.
- ▶ However, it is very clear that some fire services, where satisfaction with the treatment of volunteers by the fire service is as low as 49%, should prioritise actions to improve in this area.

RESULTS

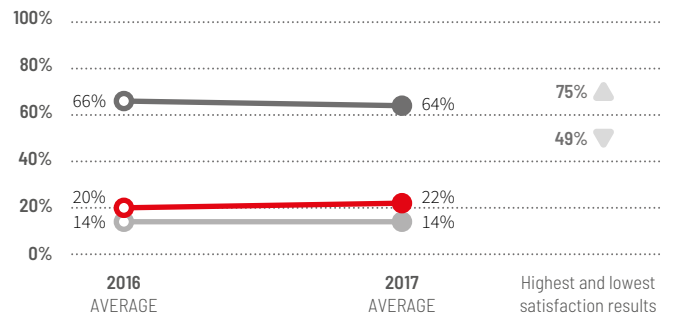
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 10 point scale: from 1 “dissatisfied” to 10 “satisfied” (with 5 indicating unsure)

7-10 SATISFIED **5-6** UNSURE **1-4** DISSATISFIED

Overall, how satisfied are you with your volunteer role?



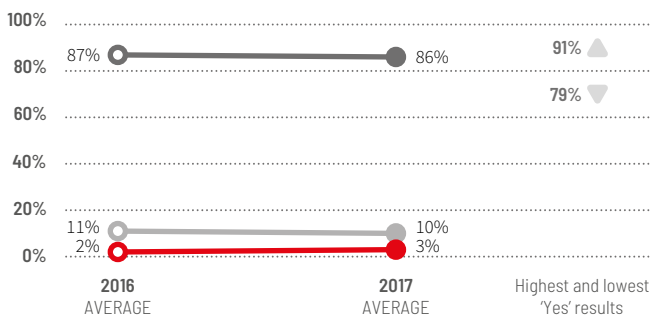
Overall, how satisfied are you with the way volunteers are treated by your agency?



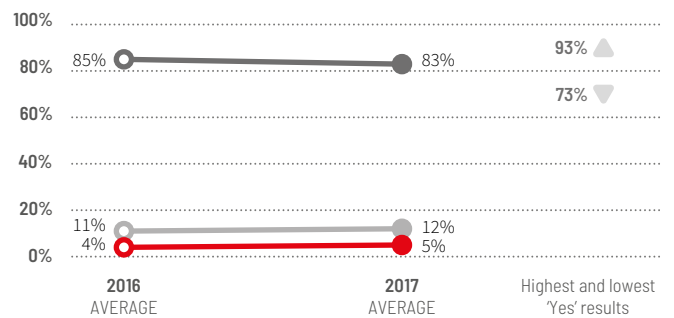
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 10 point scale: from 1 “not at all” to 10 “definitely” (with 5 indicating unsure)

7-10 YES **5-6** UNSURE **1-4** NO

I intend to continue in my volunteer role.



I would recommend being a [Fire Service’s] volunteer to people I know.



MOTIVATION


THE SURVEY

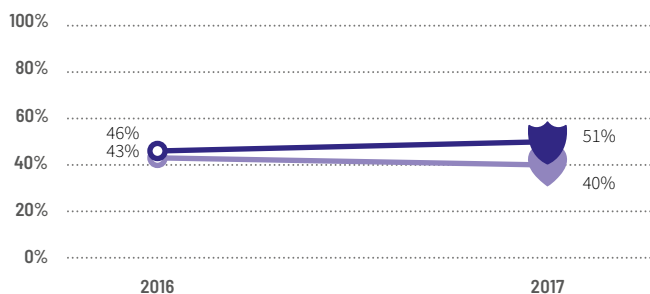
The survey asked respondents to select one of six potential main reasons they volunteer. Overwhelmingly, fire service volunteers contribute their time for two main reasons – as shown in the graph.

When compared to the previous survey in 2016, there appears to have been a shift – where the number of volunteers selecting protecting their local community is increasing and the number who volunteer for a sense of fulfilment, is slightly decreasing.

SUMMARY

 To help protect the community I live in.

 A sense of fulfilment in supporting my community in a meaningful way.





51%

To help protect the community I live in.



40%

For a sense of fulfilment in supporting my community in a meaningful way.

2%

To learn new skills

2%

To enjoy social contact with other volunteers

5%

Selected 'other' as their reason

Nb: 0% chose 'to meet new people' as their main reason for volunteering

SURVEY OVERVIEW

▶ Across the country, communities rely on trained and committed fire service volunteers to support community safety and respond to disasters.

Volunteers – who are in and of the community – are fundamental to a community-centred approach to safe and resilient communities.

It follows that the welfare of volunteers and the efficiency of the service they provide must be key concerns for fire services, governments and decision makers.

The Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey for fire service volunteers plays a vital part in information flow – it is a reputable tool which provides evidence based, qualitative and quantitative information on matters of importance to volunteers. Expansion of the survey across Australia has provided valuable opportunity to harness direct feedback from volunteers and gain an understanding of what issues are shared amongst fire service volunteers right around the country. By identifying common themes within the fire services sector, the survey can be used as a collaborative tool to provide frank responses, share effective strategies, facilitate the development of reforms, target investment and build capacity and capability.

The survey covers topics such as professionalism, cooperation, support and training, as well as reasons for volunteering and satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Individual fire service results are not identified in this report, they are provided directly to each fire service volunteer association to contribute to influencing, planning and overall decision making with the respective fire service, informed directly by volunteers.

The survey allows for a greater degree of anonymity and transparency as it is conducted by the volunteer associations which represent volunteers. Volunteer Associations work with their fire service to represent and support the needs of volunteers.

BACKGROUND

The Volunteer Fire Brigade Victoria's (VFBV) Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency was established in 2012 for CFA volunteers. It has included VICSES volunteers since 2015. In April 2016, CAVFA endorsed a proposal to expand the VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey across Australia, giving fire service volunteers the opportunity to voice their views on matters relating to their welfare and efficiency.

The inaugural National Fire Service Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was launched in 2016.

In 2017, the survey has been offered to fire service volunteers across the country for the second time, allowing for a comparison in views between 2016 and 2017.

WHO IS CAVFA?

The Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA) was established to give volunteer firefighters a united voice in discussions and negotiations with governments and key stakeholders. CAVFA provides a forum to promote the interests of over 250,000 volunteer firefighters and to ensure that volunteer firefighting continues to help keep the communities of Australia safe from bushfires and other emergencies. CAVFA is committed to:

- Providing a forum for its members to work together to put views of its combined volunteer membership to the Federal Government and other key stakeholders.
- Assisting Volunteer Fire Brigade entities and fostering the interests of volunteer firefighters in Australia through the sharing of information, networking and advocacy on matters of policy which impact volunteer firefighters.
- Assisting volunteer firefighters to support and protect their communities and the diverse environments across Australia, and to ensure that volunteer firefighting remains a viable and attractive volunteering choice into the future.

CAVFA is an affiliate member of AFAC – the Australian and New Zealand National Council for Fire and Emergency Services, a member of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF) and in 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National State Emergency Service Association (NSESVA) for mutual understanding, cooperation and collaboration when representing Australia's emergency service volunteers.

- ▶ CAVFA would like to thank the NSW Rural Fire Service Association for their generous contribution towards the funding of the 2017 National Fire Service Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey.



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