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MEDIA RELEASE

VFBV SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FIRE SERVICES REVIEW

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), the CFA volunteers' association, says the State Government has done a good job with its response to the Fire Services Review.

VFBV Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ford says the Government's proposed actions are based on building a culture of co-operation and respect, and volunteers are ready to be part of that with the Government and the emergency agencies.

A very strong theme throughout the Fire Service Review's report is the need for the skills, expertise and professionalism of volunteers and paid staff alike to be recognised and respected equally, regardless of their pay status.

"That's a good foundation for us working well together in the future, and I think that will be well received by volunteers everywhere," Mr Ford said.

"At the announcement of the review, there was a high degree of anxiety about the short timeframes for this review. Back in September last year, when the report input period closed volunteers made the right call of focussing our energy on being ready for what proved to be a very significant summer," he said.

"I think CFA volunteers will focus on the Government's response more so than the background in the report, and overall I think they will commend Minister Garrett and the Government for taking the time to make a sensible and considered response. And now true to nature, volunteers will want to get on with the job and be fully engaged in the discussions on those issues needing further work."

"As with every report there are some things everyone will agree with and some things that would draw very mixed reaction," Mr Ford said.

"The thing we need to focus on now is the next step and the Victorian Government's response to this report gives us a road map, and the invitation for much closer collective effort and strong constructive relationships gives us the optimism that some real improvements can be made," he said.

"The invitation to work with Government on a few key details is welcomed. The recognition of the professionalism of volunteers and paid staff, for their skills and experience, not their pay status, is fantastic, and the invitation to shape a better future is welcome."

“In the main the Government response to the Fire Services Review is on the mark, and for the issues requiring more work VFBV looks forward to working with Government, the agencies and other stakeholders,” Mr Ford said.

“Volunteers and paid firefighters do the same work and work together; strengthening a culture that respects and embraces this is a good thing for Victoria,” he said.

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