



Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association

State Executive Workshop 2010

Held at Youngtown training facility 7th & 8th August

Minutes

✚ Meeting opened at 1005.

✚ Present: Andrew Taylor (State President/George Town), Mathew Philpott (State Secretary), Craig Hughes (Vice President/Sthn. Sec./Claremont), Richard Cosstick (NW Sec./Devonport), Bruce Corbett (SFC Rep/NW President/Wynyard), Chris Neilson (NW Delegate/Wynyard), Graeme Facy (Asst. State Sec./Risdon Vale/Snug), Matt Buck (Nthn. Delegate), Errol Gleeson (Nthn. Sec./Deloraine), Don Jones (Treasurer), Rob Dawes (NW Delegate/Somerset), Colin Triffitt (Sthn. President/New Norfolk), Matthew Fishwick (Proxy Sthn Delegate/Fern Tree), Andrew Dare (Sthn Delegate/Midway Point)

✚ Apologies: Todd Bennetto (Sthn Region Delegate/Claremont), Michael Armstrong (Nthn Region Delegate/Longford)

✚ Welcome;

Andrew Taylor welcomed all for their attendance, and for the sacrifice the members have made giving up their weekend to attend. He also outlined some of the things to be discussed later. He also thanked Mathew for making the booklet for the meetings this weekend.

Andrew also asked if there was anyone who needed to leave early, and would change the order of the agenda if necessary to accommodate. Some discussion was held re the election of reps for committees, whether they were required (one year vs. two year appointments), the constitution was looked at and the term was unclear, noted for further discussion on Sunday(?)

Introductions were made for the benefit for Matthew Fishwick, who was attending as a proxy delegate.

Previous SE Workshop minutes moved by Rob Dawes, Seconded by Craig Hughes. Carried.

Crew Leader Discussion Paper

Andrew asked for feedback, in relation to this discussion paper, (Graeme Facy entered the meeting @ 1025am), Andrew gave a brief run-down of the history of the issue of Crew Leaders and their implementation in the TFS Volunteer system.

The general feeling of the meeting was that if recommended option (#3) was adopted that it should be a CIRCLE with CL in it which being a circle is already identified in career ranks as the leadership symbol.

Brigade Membership Discussion Paper (version 2)

Andrew gave a brief over-view of the document which is largely unchanged from last year's document – he highlighted some concerns re having a balance of members too far removed from operational personnel. This view was shared by the meeting's other participants.

Operational Leadership roles need to be filled from operational firefighters or former operational firefighters (in this context firefighter includes officers)

Pay Review

Andrew initiated the discussion by means of going over some of the history before handing over to Bruce to go into more detail as to the steps required for the review which is scheduled to be completed before the end of June '11.

Two reps were suggested for the subcommittee, by consensus it was agreed that Bruce & Andrew T continue due to their prior experience with past pay reviews.

AAVFBA & Delegates

Bruce Corbett gave a brief overview of recent happenings of the Assembly. Being an election year there were opportunities for new blood/new ideas. National President Bruce Conboy resigned his position due to no longer being his state association's delegate. There was a proposal from the VFBV

(Victoria) to change the make-up of the Assembly to be made up of Executive Officers/Directors of the member associations, this was effectively dismissed as an option by all other associations except WA's smaller group.

A lengthy debate ensued which led to the view that the assembly needed a 'permanent' position in the form of an Executive Director – the RFBAQ (Qld) & RFSA (NSW) both pledged \$50,000 a year for the next 3 years to help fund the employment of the ED and ongoing day to day running – contingent on a business/strategic plan, including moving towards being self-funded.

A fresh Board was elected; President Alan Holley RFSA, V/President Terry Hunter WA, Secretary Wendy Shirley CFSVA (SA), Board Members Mathew Philpott TRVFA & Richard Davidson UFBANZ (NZ). Dick Irwin CEO of RFBAQ was asked to participate in board meetings as an observer given RFBAQ's financial commitment & Peter Olah ED RFSA was asked to be Hon. Treasurer.

The new ED will when appointed eventually take over the secretary role and another Board member will be elected to fill the fifth spot. The ED will need to be the driver of the assembly into the future.

Training;

Discussion was held on the issue of Chainsaw refreshers, with the vast majority of the state's chainsaw accredited members being out of date therefore not currently competent. Andrew Taylor had been made aware of this as an agenda item and had the opportunity to send the RC's an email and RC Tony Davidson responded, but still at that point hadn't shed too much light on an answer except to say they were doing a 'gap analysis' to determine what the real situation is as far as numbers.

Also discussed was the ability of otherwise to get a brigade management member other than BC/1st to have access to the Brigade Training Matrix for the purposes of being able to manage their brigades skill levels. Andrew Taylor has drafted a letter outlining our problem with this and also BCs of 'dual members' are effectively locked out of that member's record if they are the second brigade.

✚ TFS Emergency Response Review (KPMG) - 12 months on....

Andrew & Bruce gave a bit of an overview of the current situation, unfortunately things have been moving very slowly in this regard. As recently as yesterday there have been some discussions held with a risk analysis expert who has worked on fire service models and similar emergency services.

✚ Volunteer Handbook Review – Update

AT & BC our two reps on this sub group of the VSCC gave an update of the current workings, asking for feedback whenever asked for, as this is crucial to the final product.

✚ Volunteer Leadership Program

Nominees list needed to be developed and handed to TFS for future AFAC sponsored Volunteer Leadership Course.

It has been the desire of the Senior Executive to get members of the State Executive to this program, with a couple of exceptions we are now in a position to start looking further afield to our member brigades, targeting senior members of those that have not already gone BCs/1st & 2nd Officers etc.

Andrew Taylor asked that members from the Executive get names to him ASAP for consideration and nomination to the TFS.

✚ TRVFA – membership, succession planning, directions, name etc

Deferred to Sunday morning 0830hrs.

✚ Concerns re supply of incomplete vehicles

Andrew Tabled a draft letter (for info) to send to TFS management in regard to some frustrations with brand new appliances arriving in their new station without gear on them necessary for their role. Some examples given was a 3.1P that didn't have a foam inductor, rendering its B Class foam system redundant, in a similar incident the problem boiled down to who was paying for it – ES or the District, inadequate adaptors with the stortz rollout, with parts being taken in a 'steal from Peter to pay Paul' manner to get the job done operationally.

A suggestion from the Southern region meeting was to ask whether retro fitting LED strip lighting could be done to 5.1 lockers as they are low and hard to find gear in due to the darkness within them. Also the rear of 7.1 particularly those with canopies – vision of the rotors from behind is virtually nil, so it was asked if LED lighting similar to those mounted on the bull-bars be given consideration for mounting inside the rear window of the canopy.

- Letter to be written, re these suggestions.

Wet weather gear

Informally we have been asked (by the TFS) to give our opinion as to whether or not our brigades believe we need wet weather gear, our colleagues at the TVFBA have asked for some as they can be caught on the side of the road for hours on end at MVAs etc in inclement weather. Consensus was that our membership was less likely to need them due to our brigades having Structural Gear for those incidents. It was agreed that the TRVFA would support the TVFBA's call for wet weather gear.

Structural Helmets – Use-by dates & replacement program

Background – some helmets of varying age/condition were sent to a facility in NZ for testing, there were four (4) tests conducted on four (4) helmets –each helmet (if able) after the previous test moved on to the next test. Not one helmet passed all tests, but it should be noted that they had sustained 'damage' from the previous tests.


In short the decision has been made by the TFS to replace all structural helmets dating '97 and prior. Your brigade should have been asked to audit their helmets giving them a count on those prior to and including '97, if you haven't got new helmets by now, they won't be far away.

There is no Use-by Date, nor is there an intention to implement one (notwithstanding the above comments)

AEDs (Defibs)


A point was raised in the recent Southern region meeting that although the TFS didn't want volunteer brigades to have Defibs due to on-going training and expenses (Batteries/pads etc.), wouldn't it be

wise for the TFS to recommend a brand/supplier for those brigades that were going to buy one regardless, so as the equipment was uniform, parts could possibly be bought as a collective buy etc.? Andrew stated he would be happy to raise the issue with the TFS, as it had obvious benefits to our membership should they themselves need one at an incident, for cost efficiencies for brigades and to flag the possibility of refresher training to be provided to those brigades who needed it into the future.


 TFS Management – Ability to Contact (local/state)

Around the table concerns were raised and discussed at length, about management particularly (but not isolated to District staff) who were hard to get hold of, or didn't return calls/emails. It was noted their seemingly increasing workloads, however the lack of notification of leave/unavailability, and the previously mentioned calls/emails were frustrating our member brigades – this was apparent across regional boundaries.

AT to draft a letter to senior management making them aware of the relevant concerns raised above.

 Association – Marketing (Clothing/promo products?)

A lengthy discussion was held in relation to clothing and other items for marketing of the association purposes. Some new polo & business shirt designs were displayed.

 Rank Markings – Discussion Paper

Matt Buck tabled a draft proposal to look into rank markings of our support brigades (i.e. those that have a 1st Officer instead of a BC). There are inadequacies when you try to match up ranks with their respective epaulettes.

As a way of highlighting the imbalance see the table below.

	BC Brigade markings	1 st Officer brigade markings
BC/1 st Officer	Wreath around impellor	2 x impellors
2 nd Officer	3 x impellors	1 x impellor
3 rd Officer	2 x impellors	1 x impellor
4 th Officer	1 x impellor	1 x impellor

There is no intention by this proposal to change helmet markings whatsoever, it is purely for uniform wearing occasions, to address the imbalance of the rank marking system between volunteer brigades – support/composite or ‘stand-alone’.

After 4 models were discussed and the pros & cons dissected, ‘option 5’ was chosen which was to argue the case of going for the same rank markings as the ‘stand-alone’ brigades. AT to take up.

✚ Meeting adjourned at 1700hrs.

✚ Meeting re-opened @ 0830hrs. 8th August.

✚ TRVFA – membership, succession planning, directions, name etc.

A discussion was held on getting more people involved in the association, problems have been evident in the Northern Region, about succession generally around the State, about some members wearing two or so hats on the exec how it would be better/more diverse if we had people filling each role separately, talk of the word ‘retained’ and its relevance to some of our member base.

A separate workshop, was proposed (24th October 1000hrs) to hammer out this topic as it is a far bigger issue than the timeframe here allows. The executive are committed to working through this and encouraging a wider involvement from our members.

Andrew asked for discussion items to be passed to Mathew prior to the workshop, with a paragraph etc. to be added to help others put your comment into the right context.

✚ Association – Honour Board

After much talk a format of; President, State Secretary, Treasurer & Life members was decided upon. Craig & Mathew to organize.

✚ Meeting Close 0930 8th August – to meet with the Chief Officer.