



AUSTRALASIAN ASSEMBLY OF VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATED

MINUTES

**OF THE 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE,
HELD AT THE OLD WOOLSTORE APARTMENT HOTEL, HOBART,
TASMANIA ON FRIDAY 21ST AND SATURDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 2007.**

President Bruce Conboy opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates and guests, with a particular welcome to Naomi Brown the CEO of AFAC.

1. ONE MINUTES SILENCE

President Bruce Conboy called for one minute's silence in remembrance of those firefighters who have died in the line of duty during the last year.

2. FIREFIGHTERS' PRAYER

Vice- President Terry Hunter read the Firefighters' Prayer

3. PRESIDENTS REPORT

President Bruce Conboy presented his annual report on the activities of the Assembly during the last 12 months, a copy of his report attached to these minutes.

4. ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES

The Secretary made a roll call indicating the following attendees -

ACT Volunteer Brigade's Association

Delegates - Simon Butt and Andrea Bolitho ESM

NSW Rural Fire Service Association

Delegates - Brian McKinlay & Andy Jaffray AFSM

Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland

Delegate - Dick Irwin AFSM

Country Fire Service Volunteer Association of SA

Delegates – Rex Hall AFSM and Ken Schutz AFSM
Observers – Wendy Shirley and Glen Willson

Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association

Delegates - Bruce Corbett AFSM and Mathew Philpott
Observers – Oliver Breeze and Andrew Dare

Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association

Delegates - John Brassington AFSM and Rob Atkins AFSM
Observers – Lyndy Smith and Veronica Atkins

United Fire Brigades Association of New Zealand

Delegates - Richard Davidson and John Thorn MVO

Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association Inc

Delegates - Rob Waterson AFSM and Ron Schultz AFSM

Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association

Delegates - Bruce Conboy and Robert Horner AFSM
Observer – Peter Downes

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria

Delegates - Gary Little AFSM and Quentin Turner AFSM
Observer – Andrew Ford

WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association Inc

Delegates - Francis Burgoyne and Ron Thompson

Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of WA Inc

Delegates – Terry Hunter and Paul Maddern
Observers – Kim Maddern and Samuel Dinnison

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dianne Tynan, Northern Territory Bushfire Volunteers Association; Don Mackrill, Tas Volunteer Fire Brigades Association; Wayne Thorley, Country Fire Service Volunteer Assoc of SA; and Don Jones, Tas Retained Volunteer Firefighters Assoc.

6. AFAC AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

At this stage the President introduced Naomi Brown – CEO AFAC.

Naomi addressed the meeting on the background of AFAC – an organisation that represents all of Fire and Emergency Service Associations throughout Aust and NZ, 28 agencies in all. Along with Land Management organisations and Forestry have been responsible for putting together the Bushfire CRC. Have made a bid for another CRC to broaden the research agenda to cover fire, environment and society.

A new vision for AFAC Fire and Emergency will be sharing through collaboration, and partnership with the Assembly will be much stronger, talking to the assembly more and this will be the start of a really good relationship.

At this stage Naomi asked the President to sign the “Memorandum of Understanding” that he had referred to in his report. This “Memorandum of Understanding” was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

President Bruce and Naomi then signed the MOU in front of the assembled members, signalling a new era for the Assembly and proclaiming the beginning of a greater understanding and support between the Assembly and AFAC.

The meeting adjourned at 6.30pm for the Cocktail Party and official opening.

7. WELCOME AND OFFICIAL OPENING

The Secretary introduced Mr John Gledhill the Chief Officer of the Tasmania Fire Service who welcomed everybody to Hobart and officially opened the conference.

8. MEETING RECONVENED

The meeting reconvened at 0830 hours on Saturday 22nd September 2007 with delegates and observers as listed for the opening session on the Friday night, and including Ted Murphy for Northern Territory and Heather Clark from New Zealand.

A DVD produced for the Tasmania Fire Service titled “Bushfire – Will you Survive” was screened for members.

9. EXTRA AGENDA ITEMS

The President called for any extra agenda items from delegates and the following were submitted –

Retention of Volunteers and Interstate Transfers – Francis Burgoyne.

Government rebate for volunteers – Terry Hunter

Representative on Standards working committee – Andy Jaffray.

10. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION

At this stage delegates were asked to consider the adoption of the Constitution of the Assembly as circulated with the Agenda.

The Secretary advised that the amendments that had been suggested at the last Annual Meeting and those brought forward by the Executive at their Melbourne meeting in December had been incorporated, these changes being advised to members as required by the constitution.

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Ken Schutz:

“That the Constitution of the Assembly as presented to the meeting, and circulated to members prior to the meeting be adopted”

CARRIED

Delegates asked the Board to have look at the Wildfire Rose Account in the event of dissolution of the Assembly and also the section on the President having the casting vote in the case of a tied vote.

It was agreed that the Board at their next meeting would consider these matters.

11. ADOPTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN

The meeting was then asked to consider the adoption of the Strategic Plan, a copy of which having been circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

The Secretary advised that this Strategic Plan had been drawn up over the last couple of years, with suggestions at the meeting in Auckland in 2005 and Fiskville in 2006, and finalised by the Executive at the meeting in Melbourne in December, and covered the period up until 2011

Moved Mathew Philpott, Seconded Andy Jaffray:

“That the Strategic Plan of the Assembly as presented to the meeting, and circulated to members prior to the meeting be adopted”

CARRIED

12. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF 24th AGM HELD AT FISKVILLE VICTORIA, AUGUST 2006.

Moved Richard Davidson, Seconded Ken Shutz:

“That the Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting at Fiskville, Victoria, in August 2006, a copy of which having been circulated to members prior to the meeting be confirmed”

CARRIED

13. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES

President Bruce went through the Annual Business Plan, a copy being circulated to members prior to the meeting.

In relation to the application for a grant for a laptop for the Secretary it was pointed out by Dick Irwin that there is a group that provides equipment for not-for-profit organisations and he would provide information to the Secretary.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

Copies of outwards and inwards correspondence were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Moved Robert Horner, Seconded Gary Lyttle:

“That the outwards and inwards correspondence be confirmed”

CARRIED

In relation to Gas and Hybrid vehicles having better signage on them it was agreed that President would follow up with AFAC.

In relation to set speed limits past emergency incidents it was agreed that this could be dealt with in the same way as the speed limits passed school buses dropping off or picking up passengers. SA was looking at getting the speed limit through emergency incidents dropped to 25kph and they would keep the Secretary informed of progress.

15. MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Executive Committee for their meetings held in Melbourne in December 2006 and Mudgee in June 2007 were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

These minutes were tabled for information and there were no matters arising from them.

16. ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Treasurer Robert Horner tabled the audited Balance Sheet for the 2006/2007 financial year, a copy having been circulated to members with the agenda papers.

Moved Robert Horner, Seconded Andy Jaffray:

“That the Annual Balance Sheet, duly audited and circulated in the agenda papers, be adopted”

CARRIED

17. DELEGATE PRESENTATIONS

QLD

Dick Irwin presented a report on fundraising and provided a handout to members

TAS

Robert Atkins addressed the meeting on the relationship of the Tas Fire Service with the volunteer associations and how that is being developed.

SA

Wendy Shirley spoke on the name change of their volunteer association which is now called "Country Fire Service Volunteer Association Inc".

She also spoke on the Wangary enquiry and suggested that for next years meeting we consider discussing the subject "How do we harness the political power of our membership?"

NZ

Heather Clark from New Zealand presented an address on supporting volunteers, recruitment, employer recognition and the review of their "Loss of Income Policy".

ACT

Simon Butt updated members on the progress in the Inquiry into the Canberra bushfires and the recent protest action taken by Volunteers.

He also spoke on a Committee he had been representing the Assembly on which had drawn up a paper entitled "Guidelines for the provision of first aid services at fire incidents by First Aid Volunteers". A copy of this paper had been circulated to members at the meeting.

18. INCORPORATION

Terry Hunter advised that he had been asked by the Board to investigate the Incorporation of the Assembly and where we sit in relation to this – the Assembly being incorporated in WA – how does this affect it covering the rest of Australia and New Zealand.

He advised that it had been recommended to him that we should look at becoming a "not for profit company" with indemnity for the Board.

Moved Rob Waterson, Seconded Richard Davidson:

"That the Vice-President Terry Hunter continue his investigation on this matter and make a report to the next Board meeting"

CARRIED

19. WILDFIRE ROSE ACCOUNT – TRUST DEED

The Secretary advised that investigations were continuing in relation to the Wildfire Rose Account and the signed trust deed, which set out the rules of the operation of the account, had still not been located.

Moved Bruce Corbett, Seconded Robert Horner:

“That the Secretary continue investigation into the Trust Deed and the matter be dealt with by the Board at their next meeting”

CARRIED

20. GUEST SPEAKER

At this stage the meeting was introduced to the Guest Speaker, Jacqueline Fisher the Executive Office Volunteer Support with the Tasmania Fire Service.

Jacqueline provided an interesting and informative address on Tasmania’s Volunteer Recruitment Project and also the Junior Cadet Program and Toolkit.

Both these projects being supported and developed with the assistance of Volunteers from both the Tasmanian Volunteer Associations.

21. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Wendy Shirley took the Chair for the Election of the Board.

Andrew Ford and Ted Murphy were appointed Scrutineers if an election was necessary.

PRESIDENT

Bruce Conboy from the Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association was nominated for this position by Terry Hunter, seconded by Richard Davidson.

There being no other nominations Bruce Conboy was elected.

VICE- PRESIDENT

Terry Hunter from the Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of Western Australia was nominated for this position by Richard Davidson, seconded by Mathew Philpott.

There being no other nominations Terry Hunter was elected.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS Cont.

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Bruce Corbett from the Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association was nominated for this position by Mathew Philpott, seconded by Robert Atkins.

There being no other nominations Bruce Corbett was elected.

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Richard Davidson from the United Fire brigades Association of New Zealand was nominated by Bruce Conboy, seconded Dick Irwin.

Ken Schutz from the South Australian Volunteer Brigades Association was nominated by Rex Hall, seconded Terry Hunter.

There being no other nominations Richard Davidson and Ken Schutz were declared elected.

22. APPOINTMENT OF TREASURER

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Richard Davidson:

“That Robert Horner be appointed the Treasurer”

CARRIED

It was resolved that The President, Secretary and Treasurer be the signatories for the Accounts of the Assembly with at least two of the three signing cheques.

23. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Richard Davidson

“That the membership fees for the Assembly be \$700 per year per membership, and this fee be the same for the next two years; it being noted that under the Constitution the Board have the power to vary this fee under hardship circumstances”

CARRIED

24. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Robert Horner

“That the offer by Don Luscombe of Martin & Luscombe Pty Limited, Chartered Accountants of 7B Raymond Mall, Raymond Road, Springwood NSW, to audit the books for this Assembly be accepted”

CARRIED

25. OPEN FORUM WORKSHOP – “DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE”

Jacqueline Fisher the Executive Office Volunteer Support with the Tasmania Fire Service, facilitated a two-hour workshop on the future of the Assembly, particular on the theme of -

“What do members and associations want from the Assembly and how do they see the future direction”

After workshopping this issue, splitting into small groups and working through the various issues introduced by Jacqueline the Assembly membership agreed on the following “statement of direction” for the Assembly, to continue as a strong and unified organisation representing Volunteer Associations into the future -

“STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS, TRUST, AND OPEN CONVERSATION TO ACHIEVE A UNITED APPROACH, BUT AT THE SAME TIME RESPECTING EACH OTHERS VIEWS AND AUTONOMY”

26. RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS – INTERSTATE TRANSFERS

Francis Burgoyne introduced discussion on the fact that there was no provision for volunteers to be able to transfer between states and also between Australia and New Zealand. This caused problems with retention of Volunteers when they moved and whilst it maybe that there can be some recognition of training, there was always the problem with Service Awards as well.

Moved Francis Burgoyne, Seconded Rex Hall

“That the Assembly should take this matter on as an issue to work through”

CARRIED

27. TAX REBATE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Terry Hunter advised that consideration was being given by the Federal Government to allow a tax rebate of up to \$300 for volunteer firefighters – he requested the Assembly to support this idea and try and get the Federal Government to approve this as it was being supported by WA. This suggestion did not receive the full support of the membership and was not pursued at this meeting.

28. VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATION ON STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Brian McKinlay NSW advised that they had appointed Ralph Walker as a representative on the SF049 National Standards Committee, which looks at specific PPE for firefighters and requested the Assembly to consider appointing him as their rep as well and thus sharing the cost of him to attend the Standards Committee meetings.

Moved Robert Horner, Seconded Francis Burgoyne

“That the Board be given the power to deal with this matter”

CARRIED

29. WEBSITE

Richard Davidson then gave a presentation on the progress he was making with the Website for the Assembly. It was up and running and members agreed that good progress had been made and congratulated Richard on his efforts.

CARRIED

30. NEXT CONFERENCE

Agreed that the next Annual Conference would be held in Adelaide, South Australia in conjunction with the AFAC conference, preferably after AFAC, but depending on the dates and whether the week-end following AFAC clashed with the Royal Adelaide Show. The SA representatives who would be organising the conference would advise of the arrangements as soon as possible.

31. CONFERENCE CLOSURE

The President declared proceedings closed at 5.00 pm and thanked all attendees for their contribution to a very successful meeting; he made particular mention of the Secretary’s work, the organising committee, and the workshop facilitator Jacqueline Fisher.

Confirmed

ACTION LIST SEPTEMBER 2007

	ITEM	TO BE ACTION BY	TIME / COMMENTS
1	Affiliation Fees	Treasurer	Accounts out by end October
2	Matters requested to be looked at in Constitution – Wildfire Rose account and casting vote by President.	Board	Next Board meeting
3	Laptop Purchase	Secretary	Ongoing
4	Speed limits past emergency incidents	President	To follow up through AFAC
5	Wildfire Rose account	Secretary	Next Board meeting
6	Representative on National Standards Committee – SF049	Board	Next Board meeting
7	Retention of Volunteers – interstate and between countries transfers	Board in first instance	Next Board meeting
8	Website	Richard Davidson	Ongoing
9	Adelaide Conference	Organising Committee	Dates by End November 2007