



CFSVA AGM REPORT 2026

State Volunteer Work Health & Safety Consultative Committee

Reporting period: 1 June 2025 - 30 May 2026

1. Overview

The State Volunteer Work Health & Safety (WHS) Consultative Committee continued to provide an important forum during 2025-26 for identifying, discussing and progressing health, safety and wellbeing matters affecting CFS volunteers.

Operating under sections 76-79 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA), the Committee brings together regional volunteer representatives and CFS, CFSVA and SAFECOM personnel. During the term, it considered operational safety, protective equipment, training, legislation, child protection and volunteer wellbeing, with a number of significant workstreams continuing into 2026-27.

2. Governance and Regional Representation

A revised Terms of Reference was endorsed during the year. The new model introduces staggered membership renewal to support succession planning, committee rejuvenation and continuity. The Committee also identified the ongoing challenge of attracting and maintaining regional WHS representation.

Region	Representative	Status at 30 May 2026
1	Lloyd Quarmby	Continuing
2	Ken Potter	Continuing
3	Darren Shield	Continuing
4	Bob Kirby	Retiring after 10 years' service
5	Scott Hamilton	Continuing
6	Chris McBeath	Not renominating

CFSVA acknowledges the contribution of all regional representatives and, in particular, Bob Kirby following more than 10 years of service and Chris McBeath as he concludes his regional representation.

3. Key WHS Programs and Outcomes

Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

The RPE Trial remained the Committee's most significant standing program. Brigade inductions, medical screening and fit testing were undertaken, with participant feedback reported as overwhelmingly positive. Following consideration of long-term smoke exposure risks, the Committee recommended an individual-issue model for respiratory protective devices.

A 'Pathway Forward' proposal was submitted to the Chief Officer. Further work includes funding, training, policies, user guidance and stock-management arrangements. At the end of the term, the project remained ongoing pending the Estimates Committee outcome.

First Aid Training and Equipment (FATE)

The Committee progressed concerns about inconsistent first aid kit contents and training levels, particularly for chainsaw operators. A First Aid Training and Equipment Working Group was established to examine equipment, resuscitation capability and training standards. Contact was also established with the Victorian DEECA forestry group to share information from a comparable review. The work remains ongoing.

Presumptive Cancer Legislation and Reporting

Presumptive cancer legislation remained a key area of monitoring and advocacy. The Committee agreed to receive quarterly reporting to assist with tracking cases and the operation of the legislation. CFSVA continued advocating for expansion of presumptive cancer coverage, including four further cancer types, and monitoring government commitments relating to volunteer cancer coverage.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Committee received regular updates on psychological injury and suicide prevention, peer support, the Emergency Services Sector Suicide Prevention Plan, Stress, Trauma and Suicide Prevention training and Employee Assistance Program activity. Work during the year included recruitment of Peer Support Officers and SPAM on-call facilitators, development of a Family Support Toolkit and consideration of improved support for volunteers and families following serious incidents or psychological injury.

4. Volunteer Protection and Operational Safety

Working With Children Checks and Child Protection

The Committee considered the Child Protection and Working With Children Check (WWCC) Policy and Procedure. Mandatory WWCC requirements apply to identified leadership and supervisory positions, particularly in brigades with cadets, while new recruits are required to meet clearance requirements as part of onboarding. CFSVA commended the policy's introduction and its importance in protecting younger members and cadets.

PPE Laundering and Decontamination

PPE laundering and decontamination arrangements were reviewed, including equipment tracking, laundry forms, bagging processes, undergarments, boots and compliance with policy. SAFECOM and CFS are progressing a trial using RFID tagging combined with a QR-code form, supported by a tracking register to help brigades and regional headquarters identify and resolve issues. Standing IDS reporting was requested for future Committee meetings.

Driver Training and Vehicle Competency

Concerns were raised regarding Quick Response Vehicles, off-road driver training and the broader absence of formal driver competency assessments. Members were reminded to record all incidents and near misses in GovSafety. Further work is being undertaken on guidance to assist with identifying members who may require additional training, with review intended ahead of a future Fire Danger Season.

Chainsaw Competency

Potential training gaps were identified in relation to chainsaw competency, including the Trim and Cut Felled Trees unit. Approaches used by other emergency service organisations were considered and further course-content review was requested. This matter remains on the Committee action list.

5. Priorities for 2026-27

- Progress the individual-issue Respiratory Protective Equipment proposal and associated funding, training, policy and stock-management arrangements.
- Continue the First Aid Training and Equipment review and consider external review material when received.
- Monitor presumptive cancer reporting and continue CFSVA advocacy for expanded volunteer coverage.
- Support mental health, wellbeing, peer support and family-support initiatives.
- Support implementation of child protection and WWCC requirements.
- Improve PPE laundering, decontamination and equipment-tracking arrangements.
- Progress driver training and competency guidance, including incident and near-miss reporting.
- Address identified chainsaw training and competency issues.
- Maintain effective regional WHS representation and succession planning.

6. Conclusion

The 2025-26 reporting period saw the State Volunteer WHS Consultative Committee continue to address a broad range of matters directly affecting the health, safety and wellbeing of CFS volunteers. Significant work progressed across respiratory protection, first aid, presumptive cancer reporting and advocacy, mental health and wellbeing, child protection, PPE management and operational competency.

Importantly, a number of these matters have progressed from discussion into practical solutions, policy development, funding proposals and improved systems. CFSVA will continue to advocate for volunteer safety and ensure that volunteer experience and concerns are represented in the development of WHS initiatives across the CFS.

CFSVA thanks all regional WHS representatives and Committee members for their contribution throughout 2025-26, particularly those representatives concluding their service.