



## **AUSTRALASIAN ASSEMBLY OF VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATED**

### **MINUTES**

**OF THE 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE,  
HELD AT FISKVILLE TRAINING CENTRE, VICTORIA  
ON SATURDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST & SUNDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2006.**

**Acting President Bruce Conboy opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates and guests. He said it was time to look forward, not backwards and hoped all delegates would support the on-going development of the Assembly and its goals.**

#### **1. ONE MINUTES SILENCE**

A/President Bruce Conboy called for one minutes silence in remembrance of those firefighters who have died in the line of duty during the last year.

#### **2. FIREFIGHTERS' PRAYER**

A/President Bruce Conboy read the Firefighters' Prayer

#### **3. ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES**

The Acting Secretary made a roll call indicating the following attendees -

##### **ACT Volunteer Brigades Association**

Delegates - Robert Gore & Pat Barling

##### **NSW Rural Fire Service Association**

Delegate - Andy Jaffray

##### **South Australian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association**

Delegates - Ken Schutz & Wayne Thorley

##### **Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association**

Delegates - Mathew Philpott & Don Jones

**ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES (Cont)**

**United Fire Brigades Association of New Zealand**

Delegates - Richard Davidson & John Thorn

**Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association**

Delegates - Hans van Hamond & Ron Schultz

**Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association,**

Delegates - Bernard Pearson & Bruce Conboy

**Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria**

Delegates - Quentin Turner & Gary Lyttle

**West Australian Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services Association**

Delegates - Norm Flynn & Craig White

**Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades of WA Inc**

Delegates - Terry Hunter & Eddie van Rijnswood

**Others**

Bruce Corbett, Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association, Acting Secretary

**Observers**

Murray McKee, New Zealand Fire Service Commission

Roger Flavell, Ian Gordon, Glen Willson & Wendy Shirley, South Australian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association

Greg Prior, Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of Western Australia

Wendy Hadley, ACT Volunteer Brigades Association

Bob Horner, Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association

**4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF 23<sup>RD</sup> AGM HELD IN AUCKLAND NZ ON 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005**

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Ken Shutz:

*“That the Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting in Auckland NZ, a copy of which having been circulated to members prior to the meeting be confirmed”*

CARRIED

**5. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES**

Nil

## 6. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ACTING PRESIDENT.

Acting president Bruce Conboy presented the following report –

“The last year has not been a good one. Our new President resigned some 6 months into the new term for personal reasons and our Secretary suffered a number of medical issues within his family and business, which prevented him from doing the job required. He has now felt obliged to resign due to continuing personal issues. Following consultation with assembly it has been agreed that in line with the constitution, I would assume the role of President.

Consequently some of the major undertakings remain on the agenda for this year’s conference. Our business Plan has been finalised but not implemented and an amended Constitution is on the agenda for discussion but cannot be adopted without 21 days notice. If we can agree on the final wording at the conference then a resolution can be signed off and a teleconference run after the appropriate notice.

Subsequently we need to consider the replacement of a vice-president and a secretary.

To the future. A major item on tomorrow’s agenda is the proposal by AFAC to take in volunteers. We have written to the Chairman asking if the proposal will be adopted and how the volunteers will be selected. We have yet to receive a reply.

We the Assembly have wasted a year with no results, but lets not look back, just forwards. However, I believe we are on our very last chance to move forward or walk away.

I strongly believe there is a need for a national body to represent volunteers. This is based on the following –

- The need to network and work together to support each other and to transfer information
- The mobility of our state based services to respond to calls for assistance interstate or overseas in major incidents
- The need for coordination of fire and emergency services at the national level. Emergency Management Australia is well placed to undertake this role. The Canadian model of CIFFC (Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre) need investigation as Canada has a similar system of state and federal governments to ours
- Volunteers need to be consulted on all issues affecting them and involvement in national bodies and forums is essential
- EMA has a volunteer’s forum in which fire fighting volunteers have one vote even though we comprise half the 500,000 emergency volunteers in the nation. SES, rescue group and welfare recovery agencies get many more votes. Further only two actual volunteers sit on the forum, one a fire fighter, the other an SES member, paid staff from other agencies attend to make the decisions on volunteers
- AFAC have recognised the importance of involving volunteers and we await an outcome of a proposal before them.

I wish to thank Bruce Corbett from Tasmania for his assistance in preparing information for the conference and offering to act as minute secretary.

To all others I invite you to join me in seeing if we can’t make a difference and get the assembly moving forward”.

**ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Cont)**

Moved Don Jones, Seconded Ron Shultz:

*“That the Acting President’s report be received”*

CARRIED

**7. ANNUAL BALANCE SHEET**

Moved Hans van Hammond, Seconded Don Jones

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

CARRIED

**8. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (AFFILIATION) FEES 2006/2007**

Some discussion ensued on membership fees. Members advised that they had not received an account for membership fees for 2005/2006, and queried why organisations that were not financial members were still included in the roll-call.

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Bernard Pearson:

*“That if affiliation fees are not paid, after accounts sent out, then those organisations not paid up cease to be members”*

CARRIED

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded Mathew Philpott:

*“That after the account books are received by the new Secretary/Treasurer that the Executive investigate membership and account details”*

CARRIED

**9. AFFILIATION WITH AFAC**

Wendy Shirley advised that Roland Orchard from AFAC had agreed to attend the Assembly tomorrow to discuss any involvement we may want with AFAC. She said that it is necessary for this meeting to decide whether we want to be part of AFAC and we need to decide this and where we want to sit in their organisational structure before he comes to the meeting.

Members stated that they would need an outline of the AFAC Structure and what they were offering before a decision can be made and what our future would be if we don't get some association going with AFAC.

## **AFFILIATION WITH AFAC (Cont)**

Gary Lyttle said that they have offered some administrative support and we needed to know what we want.

The Acting President said that it was obvious we need to workshop this issue and that he would change the agenda around to fit this in and also the address from the AFAC representative.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Craig White:

*“That the meeting be adjourned until tomorrow the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2006”*

CARRIED

## **THE CHAIR CLOSED PROCEEDINGS AT 2120 HOURS**

## **THE AGM AND CONFERENCE SESSION WAS RECONVENED ON SUNDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2006 AT 0830 HOURS**

## **11. DELEGATE PRESENTATIONS**

### **ACT**

Robert Gore and Pat Barling reported on issues in the ACT – particularly the ongoing Coroner’s inquest into the bushfires which started on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2003, which claimed 4 lives and over 500 houses. The inquest has been held up by a Supreme Court challenge but that has now been resolved.

Also spoke of discussions in regards to single fire service, the Volunteer Charter and compressed air foam system.

### **VIC**

Gary Lyttle gave an overview of problems in Victoria stating that they had decided to rally against issues affecting volunteers but due to risk issue couldn’t organise the rally. Have now organised meeting with the Minister. Volunteer Charter has become a handy document in their stance to protect the right of volunteers. Looking at some recompense for Volunteer Trainers when they are required to go outside their area.

### **WA**

Western Australia reported that they are just about a new Association – going through a restructure – have 2 VP’s and are making good progress.

Representations and votes on FESA different, depending on level of risk or what risk involved.

## **DELEGATE PRESENTATIONS (Cont)**

### **NSW**

Covers 95% of the area of the state with 69,000 volunteers – over 600 permanent staff who do not fight fires.

### **SA**

Wendy Shirley presented a comprehensive report, video and power point presentation on the Coronial inquiry in SA in relation to the fire on the West Coast of South Australia which started on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005 causing the deaths of 9 people, injuries to many others and major property and environmental damage.

Ken Schutz advised that many volunteers were required to give evidence before the Commission and this inquest has taken up a considerable amount of the Associations time over the last 18 months. He advised that Wendy, as the Executive officer of the SAVFBA has sat through the inquest every day that a volunteer has been before the Coroner.

## **12. INTERGRADED BRIGADES**

General discussion took place on integrated brigades and it was obvious that the problems within these brigades were the same, particularly in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia.

## **13. DISCUSSIONS RE AFFILIATION WITH AFAC**

The Acting President then introduced discussions on what the Assembly would want from AFAC if we become affiliated and a great deal of discussion ensued on this matter and after the discussions it was agreed that we should pursue the following principles for our requirements in any affiliation with them –

- Financial support
- Secretarial support
- Confer on volunteer issues
- Volunteer Charter
- Representation
- Assembly to avoid industrial relation issues
- Information flow
- Members involvement

These principles to be further advanced when their officer addressed the meeting later today.

#### 14. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The Acting President asked Bob Horner an observer from Victoria to take the Chair for the election of officer bearers for the coming year.

Bob took the Chair and thanked both Bruce Conboy and Bruce Corbett for stepping into the acting positions to organise and run this assembly meeting and for Bob McDonald from the Country Fire Authority for making all the arrangements for the conference.

Mick Taylor VFBV and Bob McDonald were appointed Scrutineers if an election was necessary.

##### **PRESIDENT**

Bruce Conboy from the Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association was nominated for this position by Andy Jaffray, seconded by John Thorn.

*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 Ken Schutz, seconded by Bernard Pearson.

*There being no other nominations Terry Hunter was elected.*

##### **SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Bruce Corbett from the Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association was nominated for this position by Don Jones, seconded by Ron Schultz.

*There being no other nominations Bruce Corbett was elected.*

New Zealand offered assistance with the secretarial duties through their Association offices.

##### **OTHER EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

Richard Davidson from the United Fire brigades Association of New Zealand was nominated by John Thorn, seconded Pat Barling.

Ken Schutz from the South Australian Volunteer brigades Association was nominated by Quentin Turner, seconded Mathew Philpott.

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

15. **BANK SIGNATORIES**

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Gary Lyttle:

***“That the signatories to operate any transactions through the Assembly bank accounts be the President Bruce Conboy, the Secretary/Treasurer Bruce Corbett and Executive Member Richard Davidson, with two of three to sign any transaction”***

CARRIED

16. **AFAC**

At this stage the President welcomed Roland Orchard from AFAC to address the Assembly on the range of services offered by AFAC, the make-up of AFAC and to gain feedback from the Assembly on where this organisation could fit in. Mr Orchard advised that he had only been in the job for six weeks and it may be difficult for him to answer all the queries. He did a visual display of the structure of AFAC showing the links to Volunteers through various committees. *(Copy of structure attached at the end of these minutes).*

He then answered questions from members and suggested that whilst he could suggest some degree of assistance could be given to the Assembly if it became a member, it would be advantageous for the President to arrange discussions with AFAC Management to see where this Assembly would sit.

The President thanked Mr Orchard for giving up his time and addressing the meeting.

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded John Thorn

***“That this meeting elect a deputation of two members to seek audience with AFAC to discuss membership, where we could fit in to their organisation and what assistance they may be able to give us”***

AFTER SOME DISCUSSION THIS MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN.

Members then entered into more discussion on this issue, suggesting that we should be looking for Secretarial support and have volunteers sit on sub-committees. Also we would want free membership and members felt we could build a relationship with all the sub-groups of AFAC.

It was also agreed that this Assembly could become a resource for AFAC not necessarily only a beneficiary and we should not aim too low in where we could fit into their structure.

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded John Thorn

***“That this Assembly accept in principle the opportunity to establish a relationship with AFAC and mandates the Executive to devise with the CEO of AFAC a draft plan of engagement for endorsement by a Special General Meeting of the Assembly”***

CARRIED

The President gave an undertaking that this would be done and the Special Meeting called within three months.

## 17. STRATEGIC PLAN

The Secretary reported on the Strategic Plan that was included with the Agenda Papers advising of the changes that had been incorporated. He pointed out that whilst he doesn't have the old plan, pre changes, he did incorporate all the changes agreed at Auckland last year and also made various changes to make sure that the document sufficiently covered both Australian and New Zealand Associations. There may well be some areas in relation to this that need looking at but where "National" was mentioned it should be taken to mean both in Australia and New Zealand.

It was resolved ***"that the members should take the Strategic Plan back to their various organisations and bring any changes or suggested changes to the Special Meeting to be held within three months"***.

## 18. CONSTITUTION

The meeting then discussed the Constitution and the proposed changes as shown in the document included with the agenda papers.

It was pointed out some minor spelling and numbering errors needed amendment and these were to be fixed.

Moved Hans van Hammond, Seconded Don Jones:

***"That legal advice be sought in relation to any problems there may be with this Incorporated body being only registered in one State (Western Australia) and if in fact check to see if we are still registered, as the Assembly covers all States and Territory associations in Australia and associations in New Zealand that choose to be members. Terry Hunter to check this out and report to the President"***

CARRIED

Moved John Thorn, Seconded Mathew Philpott:

***"That clause 5 be deferred and a recommendation of a new Clause 5 be accepted from the Executive on the basis of single tiered governance"***

CARRIED

Resolved that other Sections of the Constitution should also be changed as a flow on effect of any changes to Section 5.

Resolved that Section 10.3 should be changed to read ***"the Board of Directors may meet in a teleconference or by any other electronic means, which, if a quorum is present and the required notice, including the issuing of an agenda, is given, shall constitute a general meeting"***

## CONSTITUTION (Cont)

In relation to Section 12.1 it was agreed to have a look at the situation of proxies as it is only mentioned in this section, and also that the meeting agreed that the wording of this section should change to reflect that members felt that the President should have a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

It was agreed that the Executive would make sure that all suggestions be noted and included in changes that would reflect in a document that could be adopted at the next AGM.

### 19. MEMBERSHIP LEVY

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded Wayne Thorley:

*“That a levy of \$500 for each affiliated Association be the membership fee for the Assembly for the two years commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 and finishing on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007, subject to a lesser amount being paid by Associations where previously agreed affiliation fees were set”*

CARRIED

### 20. AUDITOR

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Bernard Pearson:

*“That Don Luscombe of Martin & Luscombe Pty Limited, Chartered Accountants of 7B Raymond Mall, Raymond Road, Springwood NSW, be appointed as the Auditors for this Assembly”*

CARRIED

### 21. WEB SITE

It was advised that the Assembly web site is now 4 years out-of-date and someone is needed to become the Webmaster and input information. It also needed links to State Associations and issues of national significance.

Mathew Philpott of Tasmania offered to put information into the Web site, with President, Secretary and John Thorn passing on all necessary information to him. It was also agreed that any information put on the web site should be vetted, at least by the President.

**22. WILDFIRE ROSE ACCOUNT**

Moved Ken Schutz, Seconded Hans van Hammond:

*“That the Secretary checks out and advise members of the details of this account and where it is invested and what interest it receives, when the necessary books are made available to him”*

CARRIED

**23. NATIONAL MEDALS**

South Australia sought information on the practice in other states for the issuing of National Medals. It was generally agreed that that the National Medal is given under the Royal Warrant for these medals, which is for Active & Diligent Service over 15 years.

It appears that in South Australia that nominations for these medals, which are a Federal Government Award, are being blocked at State Level.

Resolved *“that a letter be written to the Country Fire Service, South Australia advising them that our members had expressed concern in relation to nomination for some National Medals in that State and the Assembly would like to make sure that the conditions of the Royal Warrant for active diligent service are being adhered to”*

**24. 40 KPH SPEED LIMIT PAST INCIDENTS**

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded Mathew Philpott:

*“That a letter be written to the Federal Minister for Transport requesting that the National Road Safety Code be amended to include a speed limit of 40kph past emergency incidents, provided this action has not already been taken from last years meeting”*

CARRIED

**25. GAS & HYBRID VEHICLES**

Moved Bernard Pearson, Seconded Wayne Thorley:

*“That a letter be written to AFAC asking them to seek action to make sure that a standard metal identification sticker be developed for gas and hybrid vehicles as this meeting feels that the present sticker is not sufficient”*

CARRIED

**26. PETTY CASH**

Moved Don Jones, Seconded Gary Lyttle:

*“That an advance of \$250 be made to the Secretary/Treasurer for Petty Cash and it be topped up to this amount as required”*

CARRIED

**27. BUSINESS PLAN**

Moved Richard Davidson, Seconded Terry Hunter:

*“The Executive develop the business plan to cover the next twelve months”*

CARRIED

**28. AGENDA ITEMS**

Resolved *“that agenda items for meetings be called for in advance of any meeting of the Assembly”*.

**29. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

Resolved *“that the Executive investigate and report to next years Annual Meeting on a suggestion that Election of Officers of the Assembly be held every two years, rather than annually”*

**30. NEXT CONFERENCE**

Resolved *“that the next Annual Conference be held in Hobart, Tasmania commencing on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007, immediately following the AFAC Conference in that City, and it be organised by the Tasmanian representatives”*

**31. CONFERENCE CLOSURE**

The President declared proceedings closed at 4.40 pm and thanked all attendees for their input and understanding of the difficult year we have endured.

**(ACTION LIST ATTACHED TO THESE MINUTES)**

Minutes Confirmed:.....

**ACTION LIST AUGUST 2006**

	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION BY</b>	<b>TIME / COMMENTS</b>
1	<b>Affiliation Fees</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
2	<b>Bank accounts Bank, branch and signatures</b>	<b>Secretary / UFBANZ</b>	
3	<b>Strategic plan</b>	<b>Associations to confirm agreement</b>	<b>3 months 15 Nov.</b>
4	<b>Constitution .1 W.A. Incorporation .2 Legal Opinion best arrangements  .3 Clause 5 re wording .4 Re-issue amended document</b>	<b>Terry Hunter Bruce Conboy /CFA legal officer Executive Secretary</b>	
5	<b>Wildfire Rose account</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
6	<b>National medals response</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
7	<b>40 kph at emergency incidents</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
8	<b>Gas and Hybrid Vehicles</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
9	<b>Assembly annual business plan</b>	<b>Executive</b>	
10	<b>Meeting notices, Call for agenda items Teleconferences</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>10 weeks notice At least every 3 months</b>
11	<b>Web site update Maintain currency</b>	<b>Mathew Philpott  (Info to be vetted by President)</b>	<b>All associations to contribute</b>

## AFAC STRUCTURE

