

Fire Rescue Victoria Strategic Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

(Endorsed by ELT and SAC October 2024)

The Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) Strategic Advisory Committee is established under the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958* (the Act).

Scope and Role of the Strategic Advisory Committee

The Strategic Advisory Committee (Committee) provides advice to FRV on the following matters:

- Cultural change within FRV
- Workforce diversity and flexibility within FRV
- Organisational governance of FRV
- FRV's engagement and integration with the broader emergency management sector
- FRV's future direction, including emerging opportunities and risks
- Matters on which FRV seeks strategic advice
- Any other matter relevant to FRV.

Such advice is provided in an advisory and not decision-making capacity.

Strategic focus

The Committee will provide strategic advice on matters aligned to FRV's Strategic Pillars set out in FRV's Strategic Plan, specifically:

1. Minister's Directions
2. FRV's Strategic Priorities and Implementation
3. FRV's Strategic Risks and emerging opportunities
4. Matters relevant to FRV on which FRV seeks advice

Subcommittees

The Committee may establish subcommittees to undertake more consideration, if required. However, any position reached by a subcommittee requires Committee agreement before advice can be provided to FRV.

Subcommittees must report on their work at the next Committee meeting. Any minutes from subcommittee meetings must be distributed to all Committee members (members).

Membership

The Members are appointed by the Minister for Emergency Services, with a skills mix, maintaining diversity, aligned to the strategic focus of the Committee. A list of current members and their respective terms is available on FRV's website at: www.frv.vic.gov.au.

Members of the Committee hold office on the terms and conditions specified in the member's instrument of appointment. The Fire Rescue Commissioner is an observer at all Committee meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson of the Committee

The Chairperson of the Committee will be appointed by the Minister.

It is the role of the Chairperson to:

- Ensure all Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the procedures contained in this Terms of Reference (ToR)

- Manage Conflict of Interest (Col) declarations from members at meetings in accordance with this ToR and the Col Policy
- Consider leave of absence applications from Committee members
- Oversee the inclusion of agenda items for Committee meetings
- Ensure Committee meetings are conducted professionally and respectfully and provide all Committee members with the opportunity to be heard
- Manage any disputes between Committee members
- Notify the Minister of any Committee member conduct that contravenes the ToR, the Act or duties under the *Public Administration Act 2004*

Role of Committee Members

It is the role of Committee members to:

- Provide advice to help FRV build its relationship with Government, and other key stakeholders, to help progress FRV's objectives
- Attend all scheduled meetings
- Review agendas prior to each meeting
- Engage respectfully and constructively during meetings
- Act with integrity, including declaring any relevant Col that arise in Committee meetings
- Advise the Chairperson and the Minister if they become ineligible to be a member of the Committee pursuant to section 33B of the Act
- Convene meetings with participant accessibility requirements in mind. Meetings are inclusive and address participant accessibility (and dietary) requirements

Duties of all Committee Members

All Committee members must at all times in the exercise of their function act:

- Honestly
- In good faith in the best interests of the Committee
- With integrity
- In a financially responsible manner
- With a reasonable degree of care, diligence and skill
- In compliance with relevant legislation, committee induction requirements, instrument of appointment and this ToR and the Code of Conduct for Public Sector Employees

Dispute Resolution

It is the role of the Chairperson to manage disputes that arise between Committee members. Where the Chairperson is a party to a dispute, it will be managed by a mediator as determined by FRV. In circumstances where a dispute cannot be managed informally, the Chairperson will escalate the matter to the Minister.

Procedures

The Committee must meet at least four times in a financial year, with Secretariat support provided by FRV.

The Secretariat will provide Committee members with Secretariat support on meeting agendas, papers, minutes and forward planning. The Secretariat will distribute meeting papers seven days in advance of a meeting and distribute minutes within ten days of the Committee meeting.

The Minister or FRV may request that the Committee be convened for a specific or urgent purpose.

Minutes from meetings will be presented for the Committee's approval at the next scheduled Committee meeting.

A quorum for a meeting is half of the members, and the Chairperson. Where a quorum cannot be reached, the Chairperson must convene another meeting.

The Fire Rescue Commissioner is an observer at all Committee meetings.

FRV or the Chairperson may invite an individual to attend, observe or provide a briefing at a Committee meeting.

Resources and Support

FRV communication with the Committee will be via FRV's Committee Secretariat.

A member induction pack will be reviewed and updated every two years and provided to members on commencement of their membership.

Reporting

FRV consideration of advice from the Committee will be facilitated by the Chairperson, with advice provided to the Fire Rescue Commissioner in the first instance. The FRV Annual Report will record details of Committee value to FRV. All reporting to the Committee will be first reviewed through FRV's Executive Leadership Team Decision meetings.

Absences

In the absence of the Chairperson, members may elect for a member to preside as Chairperson at that meeting. If a member is likely to be absent for more than two meetings within a 12-month period, permission from the Chairperson must be sought for a leave of absence. If a member is absent for more than two occasions within a 12-month period without advanced notice or reasonable cause, that member may be removed from the Committee at the Minister's discretion on the advice of the Chairperson.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The members are required to comply with FRV's Col Policy to help them effectively identify, declare and manage any actual, potential or perceived Col in order to protect the integrity of the Committee and manage risk.

Col are common, and they do not need to present a problem to the Committee if they are sufficiently and carefully managed.

It is the purpose of FRV's Col Policy, as well as a responsibility of the Committee, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with the obligations to the Committee or its members.

The Committee will manage Col by requiring committee members to:

- avoid Col where possible
- identify and declare any Col
- sufficiently and carefully manage any Col, and
- follow FRV's Col Policy and respond to any breaches.

The Committee must ensure that members are aware of their obligation to identify and declare any associations or Col that they may have, and to comply with FRV's Col Policy to ensure they effectively manage Col as representatives of the committee.

Annually

Members must complete FRV's Annual Declaration of Private Interests form upon appointment to the Committee. Alternatively, in the event that an Annual Declaration or Private Interests form has been completed and submitted for the current financial year, members must consider if there is any change to the existing declaration form and submit a fresh declaration form to the Secretariat to declare any actual, potential or perceived Col.

Before / at each meeting

Members must identify and declare any actual, potential or perceived Col that has arisen because of agenda items, to the Chair or Secretariat, in writing prior to attending an upcoming meeting for management actions to be determined to sufficiently and carefully address any risk.

Confidentiality

The Committee aims to operate in an environment where members feel able to speak frankly and confidentially.

All Committee deliberations and papers and FRV papers supplying information and correspondence between the Committee and FRV or the Minister are confidential. Members should be aware that all materials relating to the Committee (for example meeting papers, correspondence, expense claims) will be placed on file by FRV and are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

A member's obligation of confidentiality survives the member's resignation, retirement or removal from the Committee and a member shall not, without the express approval of the Minister, expose any information accruing from membership.

The Committee must also ensure that all personal, sensitive and health information is collected, used, managed, disclosed and secured by the Committee in accordance with the FRV Privacy Policy and the requirements under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

The Committee must also manage information in adherence to the Victorian Protective Data Security Framework, which govern data security obligations for public sector agencies and the accompanying Victorian Protective Data Security Standards, which protect public sector information across all security areas including governance, information, personnel, Information Communications Technology and physical security.

Remuneration and Expenses

In accordance with the Act, a member of the Committee is entitled to receive (a) remuneration and (b) travelling or other allowances, which are fixed by the Minister of Emergency Services.

Media enquiries

Any Member approached by the media in relation to the work of the Committee should not discuss any Committee matters and refer the enquirer to the Chairperson.

Media enquiries should be escalated via the Committee Secretariat to the Minister's Media Manager.

Next review

The Committee's Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 12 months by the Minister in consultation with the Fire Rescue Commissioner. The Committee's 12-month strategic focus will be refreshed as part of the review process.