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Our Ref: FD:cp

16 March 2017

The Hon David Davis MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on the Environment & Planning  
Level 4, 55 St Andrews Place  
**EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

Dear Chair

### **INQUIRY INTO FIRE SEASON PREPAREDNESS (INQUIRY)**

I refer to sworn evidence of Mr Andrew Ford, Chief Executive Officer, and Mr Adam Barnett, Executive Officer, of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) taken by the Inquiry on 2 August 2016. During that evidence Mr Ford played a video to the Inquiry and confirmed it was similar to the version available on the VFBV website.

The video employs footage of spatial modelling developed by VFBV in conjunction with University of Melbourne's Centre for Disaster Management and Public Safety, analysing incidents over a five-day period in January 2014.

The voice-over comments:

*"The spatial modelling looks at 5 days in January 2014 during which 1600 incidents required 30,000 personnel over 95% of them volunteer firefighters."*

The views appear to convey the message that 28,500 volunteers responded to 1600 fires in those five days. I am concerned that the presentation of this data in this form may be misleading.

Preliminary analysis of CFA data indicates that approximately 6,497 volunteers were dispatched during that period. This is consistent with previous CFA estimates of volunteers' attendance at major incidents.

It is also important to note at page 24 of Attachment 7 of the VFBV written submission to the Inquiry that VFBV relies heavily on such statistics.

*"Incident statistics are available to demonstrate the initial dependence on being able to mobilise and sustain high numbers of trained volunteer firefighters and also volunteers in incident management roles during peak load situations."*

CFA is concerned that the Inquiry and the public generally is provided with accurate data and analysis of that data which appropriately reflects the important contribution of volunteers during emergencies.



It is unlikely that CFA will be in a position to provide the outcome of our research into the data within the next weeks. I will however endeavour to expedite this work. We will provide our findings to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, if we can assist further please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



**Frances Diver**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

cc: Andrew Ford, CEO VFBV