

Submission Number: NND.001.00637

Submission Of:

Your Details

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Preferred means of contact: Email

What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my professional knowledge, qualifications or experience or on behalf of a group or organisation

What is your area of professional expertise? Statistics

If you are lodging your submission on behalf of a group or organisation, what is the name of the group or organisation?

Your Submission

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?

Very little. It seems clear that despite 57 other inquiries on bushfires, we continue to make the same mistakes. Certain volunteers expressed serious dismay at how they were deployed by HQ.

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?

Upon analysis of the budgets outlined in the annual reports of the various fire services going over the past 10 years, administration of a far larger amount of funds appears at odds with the results. The increased budgets led to higher salaries, increased employment numbers but fewer purchases of vital equipment.

The charts in our analysis bear this out clearly.

For instance. The 2018-19 NSW RFS budget was \$554mn, up from \$311mn 5 years prior, or a 78% increase. One would expect that money would be spent on shiny new toys to help fight fires. The number of fire trucks in service has trended down. From a peak of 4,385 in 2014/15 to 3,883 in 2018/19 or down 11%. Water Pumper numbers have fallen from 71 to 63, or -11%. Water carriers have fallen from a peak of 64 to 53, or -17%.

Same for Victoria. Since Premier Dan Andrews was elected, over 850 new FT jobs have been added to the CFA which stand at nearly 3x that of the NSW RFS. The CFA budget, according to the annual reports has ballooned from \$484mn to \$657m over the same period. CFA employee benefits have grown from 48.7% of the budget since Andrews took over to 56.7%. Average salaries at the CFA have also grown from \$123,806 average to \$134,435. The number of CFA volunteers has fallen from 59,700 immediately before he took office to 54,621 today.

In terms of fire trucks, the CFA has less than half the number that the NSW RFS has in its fleet. Only on water carriers does the CFA trump the RFS with 286 vs 63.

What were the equipment purchase procedures? Who determines who gets what and when?

In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?

Accountability. Are we truly to believe that climate change is a major factor?

We think that the stance taken by the former fire chiefs with respect to "climate change" are not borne out of the facts contained in the annual reports while many were at the helm. In fact, Fire & Rescue NSW's only mention of 'climate change' over the last 7 years came on p.81 of its 2018/19 Annual Report,

"Where practicable, FRNSW crews were encouraged to turn off all non-essential lights on 30 March 2019 from 8:30pm until 9:30pm, joining millions of people worldwide in showing their commitment to tackling climate change and inspiring all generations to support environmental initiatives and sustainable climate policy."

This is nothing but a deflection which we highlighted in our data in the file attached.

The chart highlighted in our file highlights the number of times the word 'climate change' was mentioned in state fire authorities' annual reports since 2010/11.

The QFES mentions 'climate change' 28 times in its 2018/19 annual report as it references an earlier report written on the subject. Prior to that, there are very few mentions.

Tasmania's TFS notes 'climate change' alongside terrorism and economic downturn as things to watch in its 2015-16 annual report but makes no further in-depth reporting on global warming.

The Victorian Metropolitan Fire Brigade (VICMFB) mentioned climate change once in its 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 annual report but it only refers to the federal department that includes the name 'climate change' as a footnote. In 2018/19 the VICMFB refers to an "awareness" of climate change but it hardly sounds like a definitive statement.

Note that in 2011/12, FR NSW mentions climate change twice – once in the index and a loose passage that refers to it potentially having

impacts. Yet FR NSW makes no determination by virtue of its own personal experiences. Note in 2010/11, 'climate change' is mentioned eight times by FR NSW but even then it refers to the IPCC research, not the findings of its own in-house data.

If climate change is such a huge issue, why hasn't it been mentioned in the documentation which would act as a record. It is conspicuous by its absence.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?

We request the RC look at the data surrounding budgets, staffing, relationships with the volunteers and administrative discussions on equipment purchases.

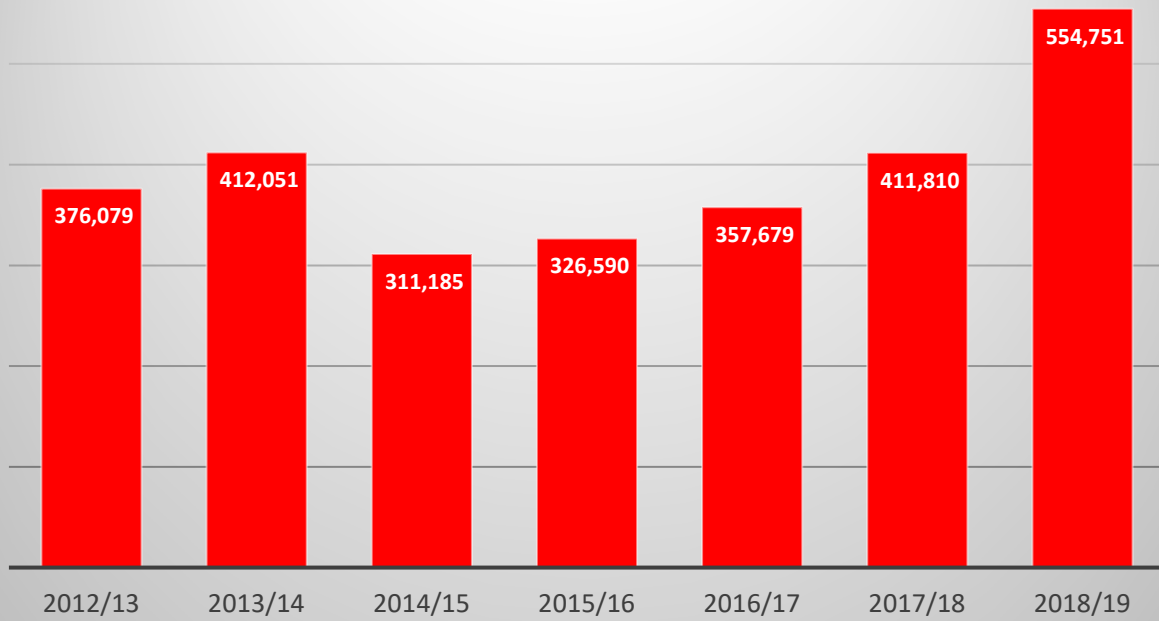
We think that the audit on the administration should be focused on, rather than the brave personnel who put their lives on the line.

Do you agree to your submission being published? Yes I agree to my submission being published anonymously

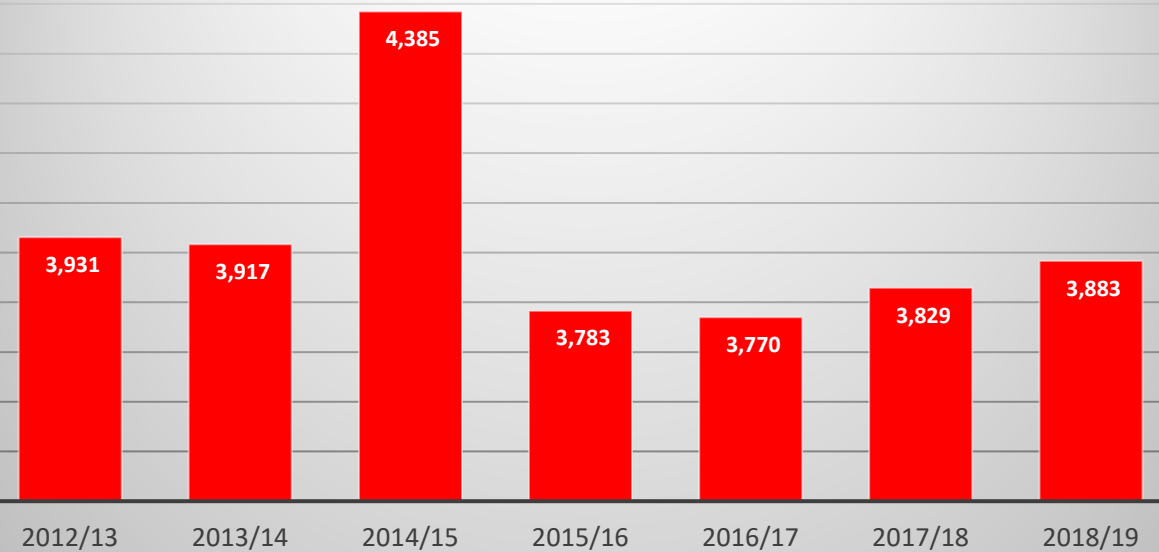
Supporting material provided:

RFS.xlsx

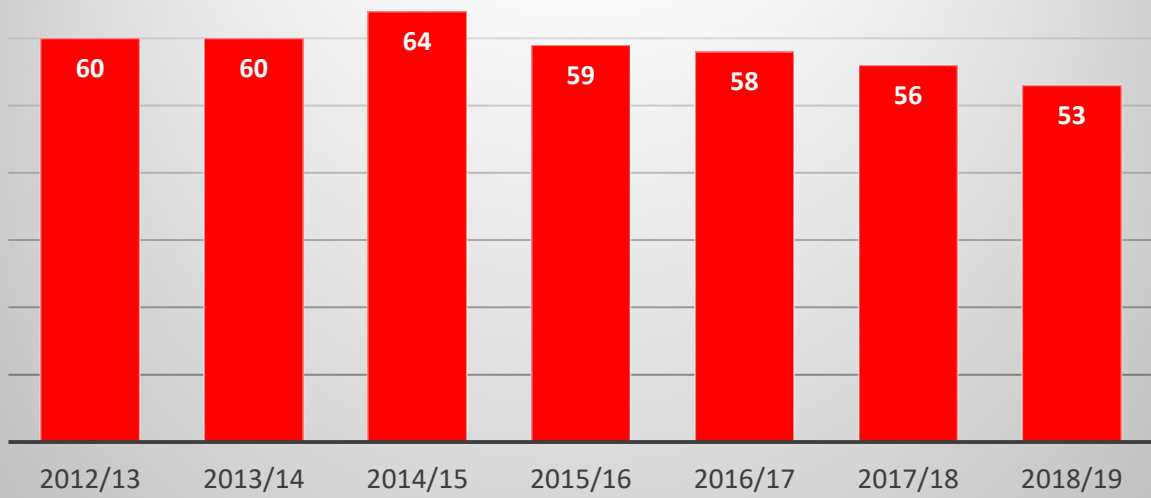
NSW RFS Budget - (\$'000s)



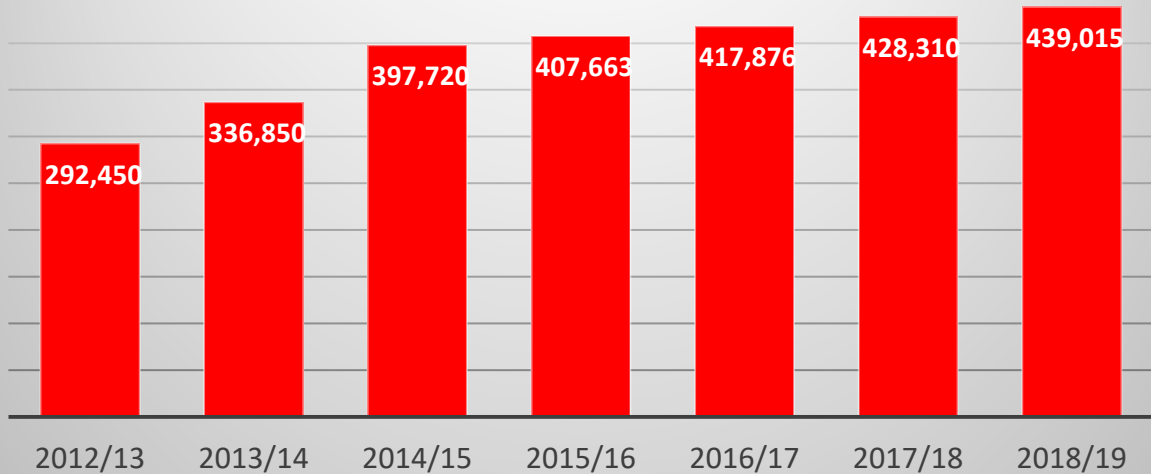
NSW RFS Fire Trucks



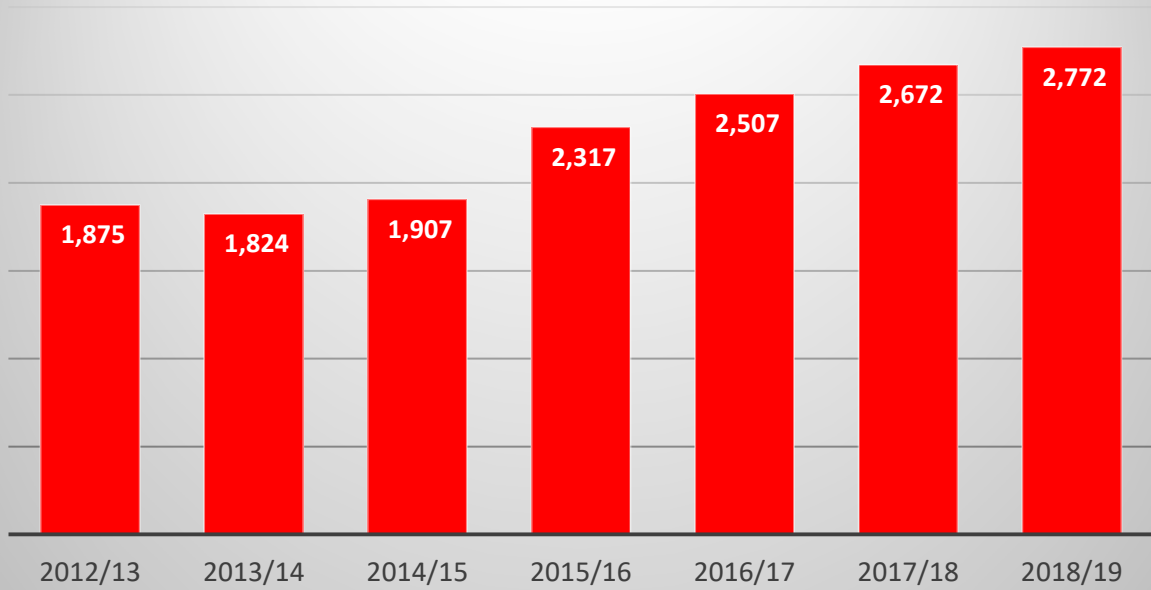
NSW RFS Water Carriers (units)



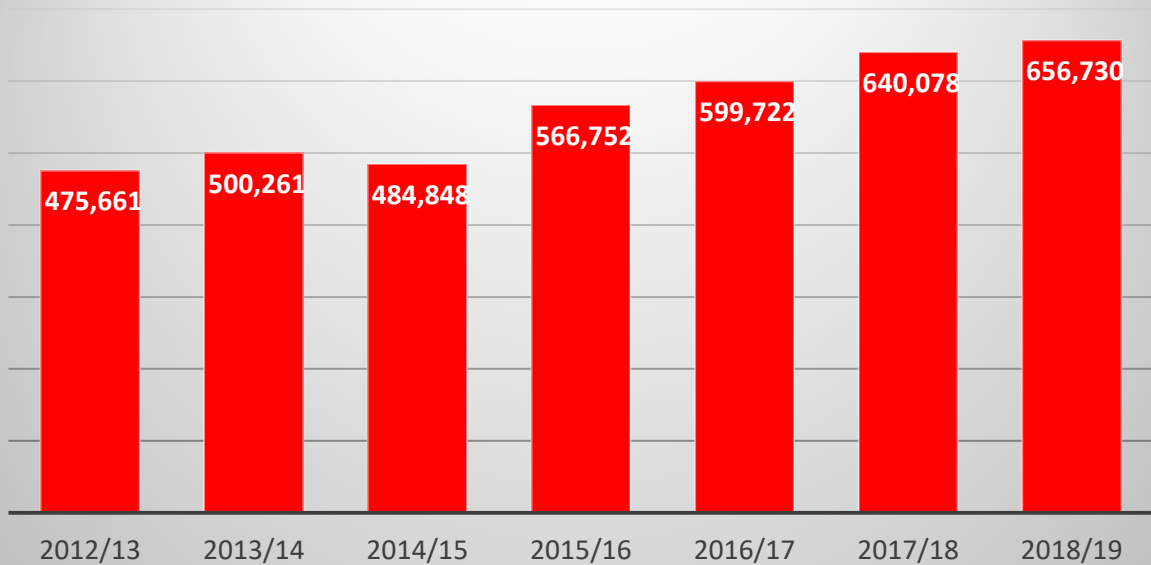
NSW RFS Chief Commissioner Remuneration (A\$)



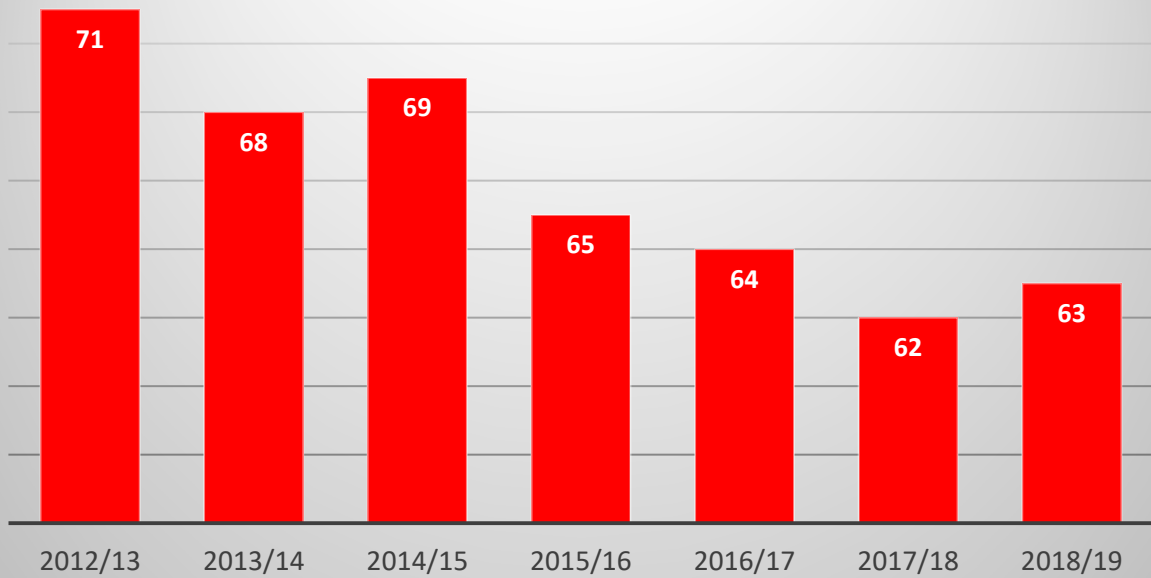
VIC CFA FT Employees



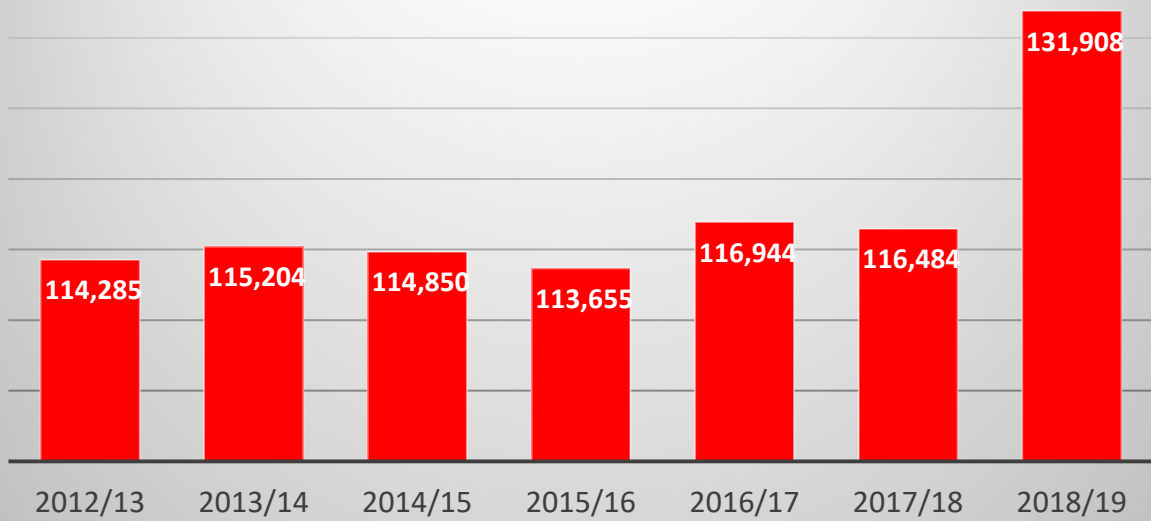
VIC CFA Budget (A\$ '000s)



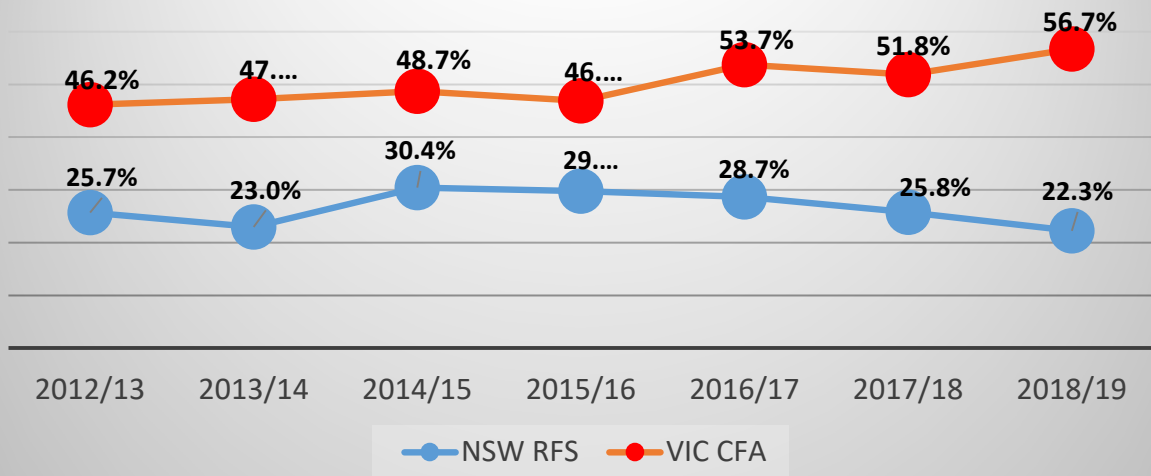
NSW RFS Water Pumpers (units)



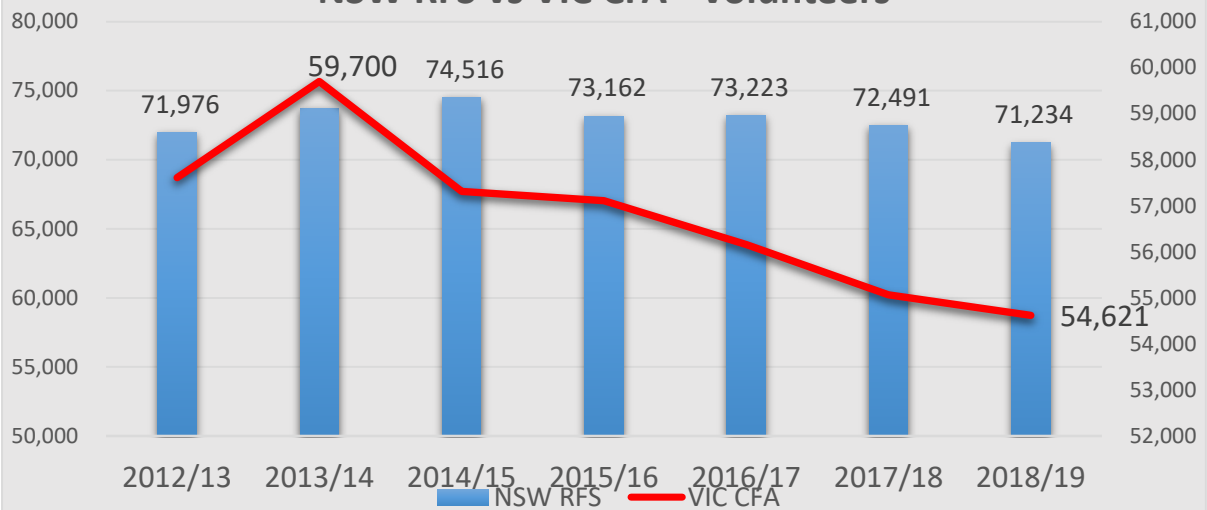
NSW RFS Average Salaries of FTE (A\$)



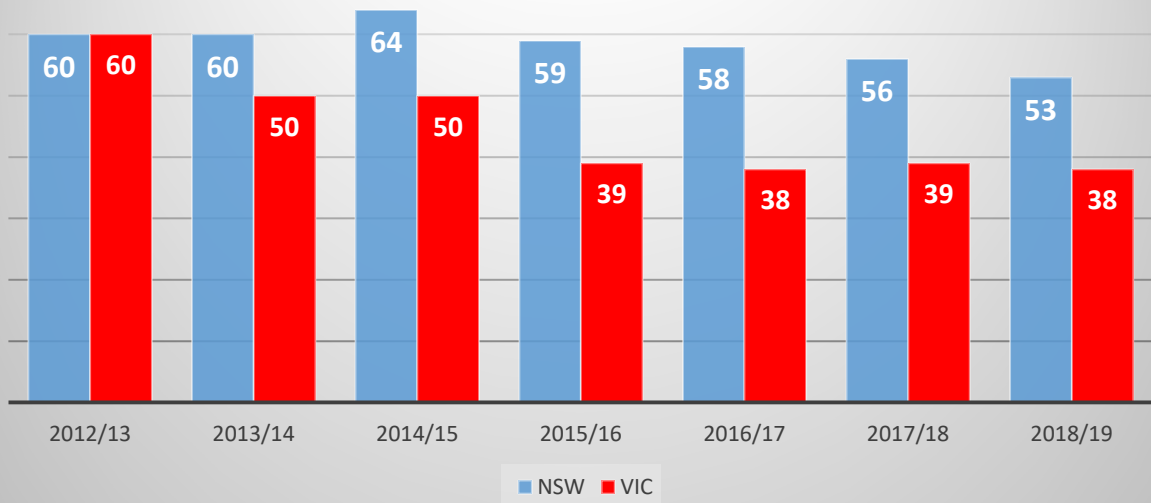
NSW RFS vs VIC CFA - Employee Costs vs Total Budget



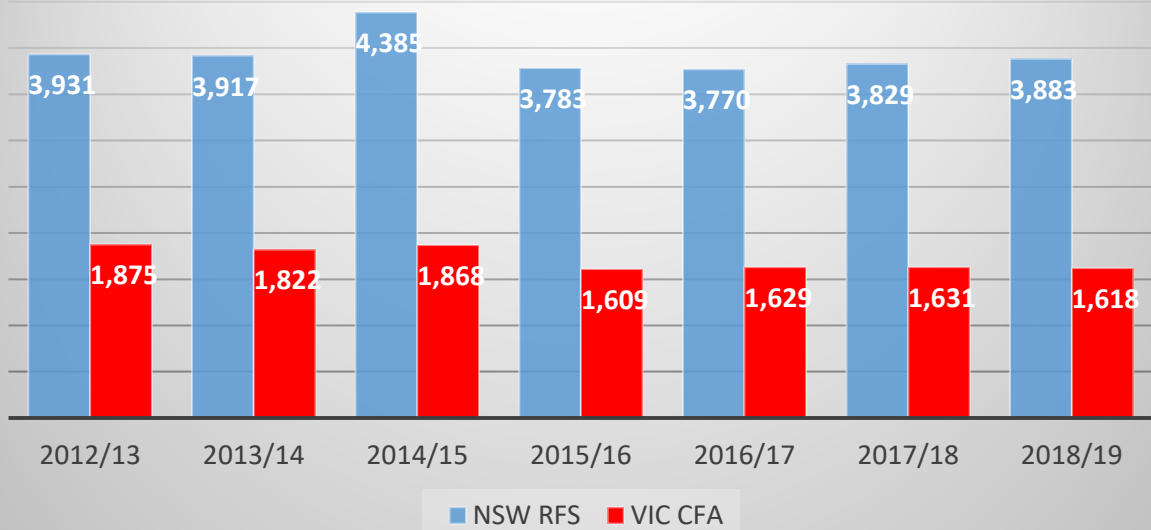
NSW RFS vs VIC CFA - Volunteers



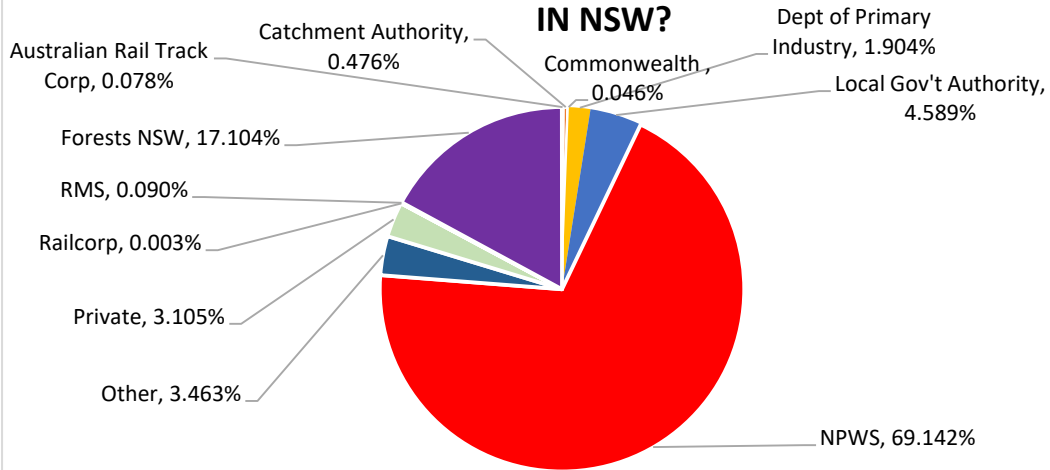
NSW RFS vs VIC CFA - Water Pumpers



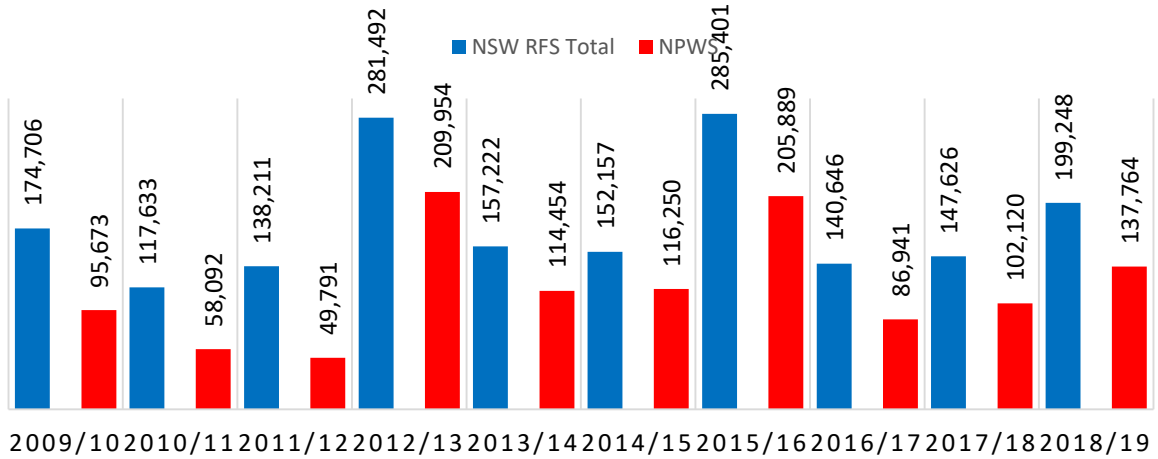
NSW RFS vs VIC CFA - Fire Trucks



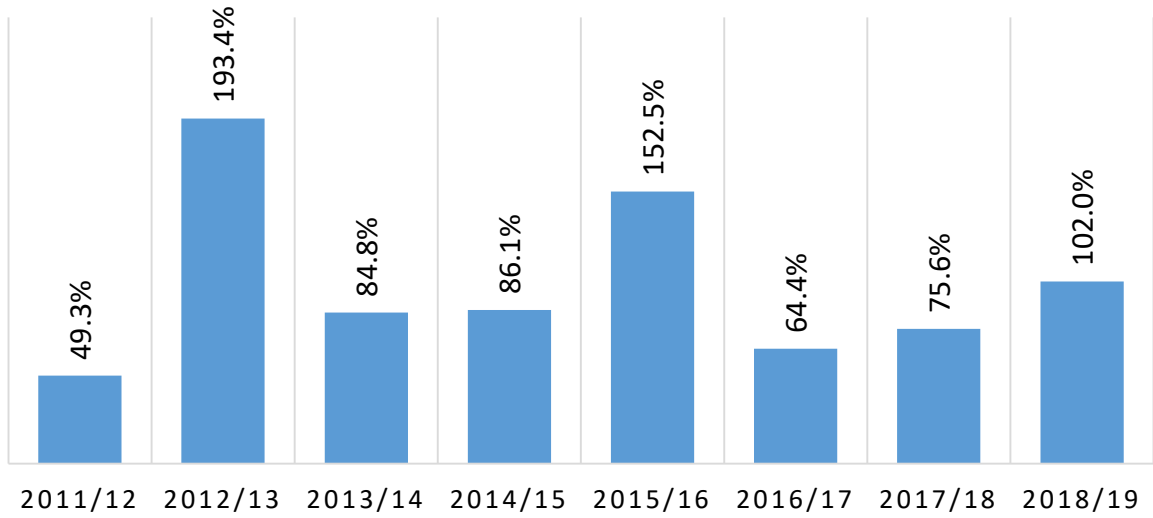
2018/19 - WHICH GROUP CONDUCTED PRESCRIBED BURNS IN NSW?



PRESCRIBED BURNS NPWS VS NSW RFS TOTAL



NPWS - % TARGET ACHIEVED



% NPWS VS TOTAL NSW RFS RECORDED PRESCRIBED BURNING

