



Centre of Full Employment and Equity

Building a just and equitable fire services culture:

UFU survey on discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
in the CFA and MFB - Preliminary analysis

Dr Victor Quirk

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Centre of Full Employment and Equity
The University of Newcastle, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia
Home Page: <http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee>
Email: coffee@newcastle.edu.au

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFA	Country Fire Authority
MFB	Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
UFU	United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victorian Branch
VEOHRC	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
VFBV	Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

Executive summary

1 Background to the study

1.1 The Establishment of the VEOHRC review

On 15 December 2015 the Minister for Emergency Services stated that the 2015 Fire Services Review had reported low gender diversity in the fire services and claims of widespread bullying and sexual harassment. She asked the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to conduct a review of:

- support services for staff who have been bullied or harassed;
- workplace behaviour, specifically issues that may contribute to an environment of bullying and harassment; and
- the lack of gender diversity in the fire services.

The Minister's public statements on the matter conflated the issues of gender diversity and bullying to suggest they were connected

1.2 The 2015 Fire Services Review commented on aspects of organisational culture. It discussed the poor relationships existing between volunteers and career staff in some areas, characterising the problem as a failure of leadership. The review heard reports of bullying and sexual harassment that it was not able to assess, nor did it indicate what segments of the fire services community were involved. Noting the obligation of the fire service organisations to provide a safe working environment, the review rightly called for remedial action in these areas yet ignored the references in nearly every firefighter submission to the risks posed by insufficient staffing on CFA appliances.

1.3 UFU Engagement with the present review

Fire services personnel have been under sustained industrial and political pressure for several years, with the 2015 Fire Service Review acknowledging their terminally damaged relationship with their senior management / executive leadership. They want a more harmonious and supportive working environment.

1.4 The UFU Members Survey was commissioned to record its members experiences so as to determine the nature and extent of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment during their employment with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Brigade (MFB). It also sought to solicit their views on topical issues including the impact of industrial disputes on their morale, their views on recent media coverage and on strategies for increasing gender diversity. The survey was designed by independent social scientist Dr Victor Quirk, and administered on-line by Economic Outlook Pty Ltd. 885 personnel participated in an online survey that generated anonymised data to be retained by the Centre of Full Employment and Equity, University of Newcastle, NSW.

1.5 Survey design considerations

To maximise participation, emphasis was placed on keeping the survey language as succinct as possible. The survey sections dealing with discrimination and sexual harassment asked respondents to indicate which, if any, of the specified behaviours on a list they had experienced. The choices offered concerning discrimination were the protected attributes of the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Those concerning sexual harassment were derived from public education material on the Australian Human Rights Commission website. A self-labelling method was used

for bullying, whereby respondents applied a broad definition of bullying to their own situation. Section 4 begins with a discussion of the definitional problems associated with research into bullying

1.6 Limitations

As this was not a randomised sample its results cannot be generalised beyond the population who responded. Although the 29% response rate is sufficient to draw several key conclusions with a satisfactory degree of reliability, conclusions about smaller cohorts of the survey population are more tenuous. Greater benefit was seen in seeking to capture as much of what respondents have experienced rather than confine their recollection to an arbitrarily defined period to enable comparison with other studies, since the lack of a random sample and inevitable differences in methodologies and circumstances of other studies invalidates such comparisons in any event.

2. Staff morale and attitudes

Following survey questions exploring discrimination and bullying, but prior to a final section on sexual harassment, a series of propositions were put to respondents seeking the extent of their agreement / disagreement:

2.1 Industrial disputation

Paraphrasing a finding of the Fire Services Review, we sought the extent of agreement / disagreement of staff for the proposition “The industrial disputes during the term of the previous government, particularly the CFA Recruits Case and the MFB Termination Case, have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale”: 90.1% agreed, 3.8% disagreed, 6.1% neutral.

2.2 The desire for a better workplace culture

Paraphrasing another finding of the Fire Services Review: “As a firefighter / fire service officer I have had enough of this negative environment and simply want to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where my efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability”: 95.3% agreeing overall, 1.2% neutral and 3.5% disagreeing.

2.3 Media coverage of the Enterprise Agreement

2.3.1 Opinion survey on the media coverage of the enterprise agreement “The recent media coverage of the Enterprise Agreement has had a profoundly damaging effect on morale”: 95.5% of respondents agreed, 0.9% neutral, 3.6% disagreed.

2.3.2 Comments associated with the impact of media coverage of recent industrial issues: A compilation of free-text comments by survey respondents highlights the personal emotional harm done to firefighters by these attacks. They condemn the political motivations of media and political figures responsible, the failure of the senior leadership to defend staff reputations, the exposure of firefighters to public aggression and emotional undermining.

2.4 Impact of industrial campaigns over enterprise bargaining negotiations on morale

“The industrial campaigns surrounding our Enterprise Bargaining negotiations have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale”: 87.9% of respondents agreed, 4.5% neutral, 7.7% disagreed.

2.5 Comments on factors impacting on morale

Compilation of free-text comments reflecting on the demoralisation of the workforce as a tactic during each EBA negotiation, including personal impacts, how it makes staff feel disrespected by their organisations, their frustration with the politicization of their industrial negotiations, desire for more consultation by the union by some and appreciation of the union by others, the intrusion of the dispute into their social lives, reluctance to disclose their occupation, the poor introduction to firefighting for new recruits, and concern for the wider damage that has been done to public trust in the profession.

2.5.1 The relationship with volunteers: MFB staff are impacted by volunteer attitudes, resentment of the unwillingness to discipline volunteers, VFBV have fostered animosity among firefighters, staff are calling for separate career and volunteer services.

2.6 The attitude to gender diversity

A series of questions were asked to clarify why firefighters were critical of efforts to increase the proportion of female firefighters by making it easier to pass the selection process.

2.6.1 Recruitment issues: women are not encouraged to see firefighting as a potential career, fewer women than men apply, many have difficulty meeting the physical requirements of the assessment. A series of questions sought to separate the issue of recruit selection rigour from support for gender diversity.

2.6.2 Respect for women firefighters: the question asks: “to what extent do you agree with the following proposition: current women firefighters are well respected among career firefighters”: Overall 91.2% agreed, 5.2% disagreed and 3.6% had no opinion. Agreement was weaker among women: 87.9% of female firefighters agreed, 9.1% disagreed, 3.6% neutral, compared to 92.5% male firefighters agreed, 4.3% disagreed, 3.2% neutral.

2.6.3 The desirability of gender diversity as an objective: “...If it can be attained without compromising rigorous recruitment standards, a greater male / female balance will be a positive step.” More male firefighters supported the proposition (77.2%) than female firefighters (72.7%), with women firefighters more neutral (18.2%) than male firefighters (14.6%).

2.6.4 Maintaining recruitment standards: “There should be no compromising of recruitment standards”: 95% agreed, 4% disagreed, 1% neutral. Firefighters: Female 100% agree, none disagree; Male 95.9% agree; 3.5% disagree.

2.6.5 Prioritisation of public and personal safety: “Career firefighters prioritise public safety and firefighter safety above other issues”. Agreed: females 93.6%, males 94.5%. Disagreed: females 2.1%, males 4.3%.

2.6.6 Comments in relation to enhanced gender diversity: Compilation of free text comments consistently of the view that the pursuit of a greater gender balance should not be at the expense of ensuring that new recruits are capable of doing the job. The leadership are insincere in promoting this goal since they don’t support the women and staff with atypical needs they already have, the gender issue is raised as an industrial relations tactic, its crucial to ensure people can do the job, assessment requirements need to reflect the job requirements, low gender diversity reflects the lack of appeal the job has for most women, women are well regarded as firefighters.

2.6.7 Conclusions regarding attitude to gender diversity: the predominantly male career firefighter workforce appears to be very positive toward the presence of women firefighters, to the point that slightly more males than females believe greater gender diversity would be a positive development. Promoting public awareness of women firefighters to have more consider it as a career, using targeted marketing programs, and providing pre-assessment orientation and training program would help attract and select more women, whereas lowering assessment standards for women would undermine the standing of female firefighters and jeopardise operational safety.

3. Discrimination

3.1 Definition

Respondents were asked if they had been adversely treated because they had any of the ‘protected attributes’ listed in the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

3.2 Survey question

We define ‘adverse treatment’ and introduce the protected attributes.

3.3 Respondents reporting whether they have experienced discrimination

Overall, 65.3% of respondents report no discrimination and 34.7% have experienced it. 55.3 % of females have, 33.5% of males have. Females in CFA and MFB report similar levels (55.6%,55.2%), whereas twice as many CFA males (46.7%) experience it than MFB males (23.9%). Non-operational staff report higher levels (63.4%) than firefighters (33.3%), particularly in the MFB (73.3% vs 24.2%).

3.4 Forms of discrimination reported: both services

The most frequently cited protected attributes on account of which respondents claimed to have been adversely treated are ‘employment activity’ (35.8%), Industrial activity (33.9%), political belief (5.5%) and Age (4.9%). For women, sex discrimination (25%), pregnancy (12.5%), employment activity (10.4%) and industrial activity (10.4%) are the principal bases of their discrimination.

3.5 Forms of discrimination: CFA

47.2% of CFA staff report adverse treatment in relation to a protected attribute, with 40.4% of these saying it is due to their employment activity, largely because of the treatment they receive for being paid employees in a volunteer-based organisation. 32% cite their industrial activity, 5.3% their political beliefs and 4.7% their age as the reasons for their adverse treatment. Sex discrimination, pregnancy, industrial activity and gender identity are equally of concern (18.2%) for female firefighters, while sex discrimination is the key issue for non-operational females (33%).

3.6 Forms of discrimination: MFB

25.7% of MFB staff report adverse treatment in relation to a protected attribute. Of these 36.5% say they were adversely treated because of their industrial activity, 29.1% for their employment activity, 5.7% for their political beliefs and 5.2% because of their age.

3.7 Discussion on discrimination

Proportionally more women than men, and more CFA than MFB respondents to the survey say they have experienced discrimination. The key difference between the agencies is that CFA staff are paid firefighters in a volunteer organisation, and as such are excluded and unacknowledged on a systematic basis. They were targeted for vilification in some areas by volunteers for being paid and for being members of the union. From comments it is possible some references to ‘gender identity’ were intended to mean ‘sex discrimination’, which is clearly the most significant form of discrimination for women. The lack of adequate procedures for accommodating pregnancy is a significant issue.

4 Bullying

4.1 Definition and methodological issues

Meaningfully comparable data as to its prevalence is undermined by differences in definitions used in different studies and with how those definitions are operationalised in research practice. Four common elements appear in most definitions: frequency (eg., twice per week) and duration (eg., 6 months), the reaction of the target (psychological distress), the balance of power between perpetrator and target, and the intent (hostility) of the perpetrator. Each can be criticised for arbitrariness, ignoring damaging behaviour, and some defy measurement. In this study we use a broad definition to capture a wide range of aggressive workplace behaviour, along with certain parameters (currency and duration) to subsequently apply a filter for rough comparison with other studies.

4.2 Survey question

Respondents are asked (yes / no) if they have experienced bullying behaviour as described in a descriptive paragraph.

4.3 Experience of bullying and workplace aggression – both services

Overall, 31.8% of respondents said they had, notably 78% of non-operational staff and 29.2% of firefighters. 41.2% of CFA respondents and 24.9% of MFB respondents claim experience of bullying, with non-operational staff reporting twice the levels of career firefighters in both agencies. Female firefighters claim less bullying than males in the CFA (25% vs 38.7%), and more than males in the MFB (33.3% vs 22.7%).

4.4 Duration of bullying

Of personnel who claim to have experienced bullying 59.4% reported it lasted for more than 6 months (an oft-used parameter of definitions in international literature). 81% of women who reported bullying said it lasted more than 6 months, compared with 57.4% of the males who had been bullied. 75% of the bullying disclosed by non-operational staff was for more than 6 months, compared with 57.4% of that reported by firefighters.

4.5 Is the bullying still happening?

44.1% of respondents who stated they had experienced bullying indicated it was still occurring at the time of the survey, whereas 42.7% of respondents reported it was not. Less female experience of bullying was current (38.1%) than that experienced by males (44.2%). 63.6% of bullying experienced by non-operational females was current compared to 10% of that reported by female firefighters.

4.6 Currently experienced bullying of longer than 6 months duration

Not derived from a stratified random sample, and in the absence of evidence that behaviour conformed to a twice per week frequency (required to constitute bullying in some literature), we can report currently experienced bullying with a duration of more than six months for rough comparison with other studies. A larger proportion of women (17%) report current bullying than men (11%), a larger proportion of non-operational staff (39%) report current bullying than career firefighters (10.2%), and slightly more MFB staff (12.3%) report current bullying than staff of the CFA (10.5%). Female career firefighters report lower rates of current bullying (3%) than their male counterparts (10.3%).

4.7 Characteristics of bullying

Staff who stated they experienced workplace aggression were asked to describe some of its characteristics:

4.7.1 Bullying and other workplace aggression individually or as one of a group: 38.8% of these were bullied as individuals, 29.2% as one of a group, 31.7% were bullied on different occasions as both. Proportionally more were bullied as individuals in the CFA than in the MFB. Bullied females were more likely to experience this as individuals than males, less likely as one of a group, and more likely on both an individual and group basis. Female firefighters reporting bullying did so more as individuals (60%) than as part of a group (10%), whereas males did so more equally.

4.7.2 Primary perpetrators of bullying experienced: overall, respondents cite senior managers / executives (38.1%), immediate supervisors (19.2%) and volunteers (17.1%) to be the principle perpetrators of the bullying they have experienced during their careers with their present fire service. For CFA staff, volunteers are the principal offenders (28.1%), followed by immediate supervisors (23.5%) and senior managers / executives (22.2%). For MFB staff, senior managers / executives are by far the most cited perpetrators (57%) followed by a co-worker (15.6%) and immediate supervisor (14.1%). Female staff also cite senior managers / executives (33.3%), and immediate supervisors (28.6%) as the main sources of bullying they have experienced, with co-workers (23.8%) displacing volunteers as the third most common category of person bullying them. Males place senior management / executives at the top of their list of perpetrators (38.4%) with immediate supervisors and volunteers sharing second place (18.6%).

4.7.3 Perpetrators of current bullying which has occurred for 6 months or more: 79.4% of MFB respondents report that senior management /executives are the principal perpetrators of the bullying they were experiencing for more than six months at the time they completed the survey. This comprised 60% of female MFB respondents currently being bullied and 82.1% of MFB males currently experiencing bullying. MFB respondents made up 61.8% of respondents currently experiencing bullying. CFA staff comprised 38.2% of respondents reporting current bullying, 28.2% of whom cited senior management as primarily responsible, 15.4% an immediate supervisor and 10.3% a volunteer.

4.7.4 Why they were targeted? Respondents who reported bullying at some stage in their career with their present employer were asked to respond in free-text to the question “to the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?” The top five nominations were (1) as an industrial relations tactic (2) for being a union member (3) For being a career fire fighter (4) Ego, need to dominate others , sociopathy (5) Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters. The first 3 of these reasons collectively account for 68.8% of reasons offered by those who were currently bullied for more the 6 months at the time of the survey.

4.8 Governance processes

Do staff trust that their organisation will treat them fairly?

4.8.1 Use of formal complaint processes: staff who experienced bullying in their careers were asked: “Did you make a complaint under a formal reporting process that you were being bullied?” 79% of bullied respondents did not make use of a formal reporting process, while 21% did so. A larger proportion of bullied females (33.3%) availed themselves of the formal processes than did males (19.8%). Non-operational bullied staff were roughly twice as likely as bullied firefighters (37.5% compared with 18.9%) to formally complain. The gender difference as to who formally complained was more pronounced among non-operational staff (females 45.5%, males 33.3%) than firefighters (females 20%, males 18.6%). A higher proportion of CFA bullied respondents (24.8%) formally complained than did those of the MFB (16.4%).

4.8.2 Who was aware the person believed they were being bullied? “What other personnel did you inform about this bullying?” Staff overall mostly made trusted co-workers aware (41%),

including both females (41.9%) and males (41.6%). Among non-operational staff, males (53.1%) did so more than females (38.5%), while among firefighters females (47.1%) did so more than males (40.6%). Non-operational staff, particularly females (23.1%), informed the UFU more than they informed their supervisors (15.4%). The UFU was consulted more often (17.1%) than Human Resources Departments (5.1%), including by females (16.3% vs 14%) overall. Immediate supervisors were consulted more often by firefighters (22%) than by non-operational staff (12.1%). 5.7% of males consulted no one, compared to 2.3% of females.

4.8.3 Did a senior manager intercede in the bullying? “Did your senior manager intercede in your case?” Senior managers interceded in 25.6% of claimed bullying cases, and as a consequence of their intervention improved the situation for 8.5% of respondents, worsened the situation for 5%, and had no effect discernible to 12.1% of respondents. They interceded in proportionally more cases concerning female staff (42.9%) than males (24.4%), tending to worsen (14.3%) rather than improve (9.5%) their situation, apart from when they had no discernible impact (19%). Among firefighters, senior manager intervention occurred more often in female cases (60%) than male cases (23.6%), to equally good and bad effect in the MFB, and to no effect in the CFA. 18.2% of female non-operational respondents overall noted in free text under ‘other’ that the senior managers were the perpetrators of the bullying they experienced.

4.8.4 Satisfaction with the formal complaint process: respondents who indicated they had lodged a complaint through a formal process were asked to indicate their level of agreement / disagreement with the statement “My complaint was fairly considered and I am satisfied with the outcome”. Overall, 83.1% of respondents disagreed with the proposition, 10.2% agreed and 6.8% were neutral. Females more strongly disagreed than males (85.7% vs 56.9%), and no females agreed with the proposition or were neutral compared with 11.8% of males who did agree. A larger proportion of non-operational staff strongly disagreed (83.3%) than did firefighters (53.2%), a difference that was more pronounced in the MFB than the CFA.

4.8.5 Whether it improved the situation to formally complain: “My situation improved after making a formal complaint”. Overall, 13.6% of respondents agreed with the proposition, 5.1% were neutral and 81.4% disagreed. Male firefighters were the only respondents to express neutrality on the subject (6.8%). 90.5% of MFB respondents disagreed compared with 76.3% from the CFA. 4.8% of MFB respondents agreed compared with 18.4% of CFA respondents.

4.8.6 Assistance provided by staff to lodge a formal complaint: “I was given advice and support in making my application by my employer”. 79.7% of respondents disagreed and 10.2% agreed with the proposition overall. Females disagreed less (71.4%) than males (82.4%). Non-operational staff disagreed less (75%) than career firefighters (80.9%) and agreed more (16.7% vs 8.3%). Non-operational and career firefighter female respondents with the CFA completely disagreed with the proposition, while 13.9% of males agreed with it. No MFB career firefighters agreed with the proposition.

5 Observed bullying

5.1 Purpose of the data

While not useful as a guide to prevalence, reports of observed bullying indicate the visibility of these issues, and we can solicit observer opinions on governance processes and the impact of bullying on those who observe it.

5.2 Who has observed bullying?

296 (33.4%) of respondents claim to have observed bullying. A significantly larger proportion of non-operational staff (75.6%) in both fire services have observed bullying more than firefighters (31.4%). MFB: 93.3% of non-operational respondents report having observed bullying compared with 27.9% of MFB firefighters. Female and male firefighters report proportionately similar levels of observed bullying (30.3% and 31.4% respectively).

5.3 Characteristics of observed bullying

5.3.1 Perpetrators: on the occasions where you have witnessed others being bullied, who was doing the bullying? 31% of perpetrators nominated are senior manager / executives, (34.1% non-operational staff nominations, 30.6% career firefighters nominations). Females were less inclined (13.8%) to nominate senior managers than were males (32.6%), particularly female firefighters (6.7%). Immediate supervisors are the main perpetrators nominated by female observers of bullying (37.9%), followed by co-workers (34.5%) which are the second largest category overall at 21%. Volunteers (17.8%) are nominated more frequently than immediate supervisors (16.2%) by males. UFU officials are nominated by one non-operational female staff member in the MFB, and one male firefighter in the CFA.

5.3.2 What forms does the observed bullying take? We asked: “What forms does this bullying take? What do the bullies do?” The 5 most common (free-text) replies by observers of bullying were (1) verbal abuse; (2) mass media vilification; (3) direct or indirect undermining comments or rumour-mongering; (4) belittling / making fun of people; and (5) intimidation by rank.

5.3.3 Observed bullying: why were the victims targeted? “Why do you think these people were targeted for bullying?” The 10 most common (free-text) replies by observers of bullying were (1) Because they were supporting the union; (2) Because they were career firefighters; (3) To undermine community standing of firefighters to attack their conditions; (4) Easy target they would not fight back; (5) For expressing their opinion; (6) Don’t know; (7) Not conforming to management views / strategy; (8) Speaking out about poor management; (9) Volunteers believe they can do as they wish with impunity; and (10) Personal / personality flaw of the bully.

5.3.4 The willingness to report: “In your opinion, how often do those who are bullied make a formal complaint?” The largest proportion (72.6%) of observers of bullying thought those bullied ‘rarely’ make a complaint, a view held by 85% of females and 71.5% of males. The next largest cohort (17.2% overall) is of respondents who say the people they observe being bullied never make a formal complaint.

5.3.5 Observer’s perception of a more senior officer’s awareness: “How often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?” Respondents are fairly divided between ‘rarely’ or ‘most times’ as to a more senior officer knowing the person they are observing feels they are bullied. CFA staff favour ‘rarely’ (48.3% vs 37.8%) and MFB staff favour ‘most times’ (31.4% vs 45.8%). MFB respondents are twice as inclined (10.5% vs 4.2%) to report more senior staff ‘always’ know. A larger proportion of female staff (55%) than male staff (38.7%) in both agencies consider that it is rare for a more senior officer to know a person feels they are being bullied.

5.3.6 Staff perception of the awareness of senior management “In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied?”. The predominant view of males (44.9%) and females (55%) is that senior management are rarely aware of specific cases of bullying occurring, with the view more pronounced in the CFA than the MFB. A sizeable proportion of staff (27%) are nevertheless of the view that senior managers know ‘most times’, a view embraced by proportionally more non-operational staff (38.4%) than career firefighters (28.7%) in both services. 13.5% of staff thought they were never aware, and 8.5% that they were always aware.

5.3.7 Observer’s perception of a fair formal reporting process: “In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?” 16.9% of respondents who had observed bullying believed a fair formal reporting process was in place to hear a bullying complaint, while 48.3% of respondents believed not and 27% were neutral on the subject.

5.3.8 What caused the bullying to stop? “In considering the cases of bullying you are aware of, what made the bullying stop?” The largest proportion of respondents overall (38.1%), in each fire service, and of males, indicated that the matter they observed did not resolve. Females are proportionally more inclined to report that the target left or resigned (46.7%) than are males (21.8%). 3.3% of females and 6.2% of males responded that the matter was resolved through effective intervention by management. Roughly 20% of respondents (male/female, non-operational/firefighter, CFA, MFB) fairly consistently express the view that the bully left (moved elsewhere) or resigned.

5.4 Discussion of data on bullying

5.4.1 The degree of trust in the system: a significant number of staff feel they have experienced bullying during the course of their employment in the Victorian fire services. Non-operational staff report more than twice the rate of bullying of career firefighters. Bullying can be hard to prove, and is variously defined, so we can only say these staff have experienced some form of workplace aggression during the course of their careers, that may be technically defined as bullying, or possibly not. We applied both a tight definition of bullying to the data, namely *current* bullying of more than 6 months duration, and a broader non-time delimited definition. With both loose and tight definitions senior managers are nominated as the main perpetrators according to respondents. Staff appear not to trust or expect their formal complaints to be handled fairly or effectively, just as they do not trust their senior management (according to the Fire Services Review) (O’Byrne, 2016: 2). The policy implications of this are (1) provide the staff with senior management they can trust; and (2) Provide a totally independent and adequately resourced professional conduct review and monitoring board to formally adjudicate issues of workplace aggression, with the power to order the disciplining of staff, senior managers, and volunteers in the case of the CFA.

6 Sexual Harassment

6.1 Definitions

Sexual harassment is defined under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 as: an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person—in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

6.2 Exposure to potentially sexually harassing behaviours

“Has another fire service employee offended, humiliated or intimidated you by:”

“staring or leering”: 4.4% of staff ‘once or twice’, including 17% of female respondents and 3.7% of male respondents;

“unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching”: 2.3% of staff overall, including 17% of female respondents and 1.3% of male respondents;

“suggestive comments or jokes”: 8.1% ‘once or twice’, 21.3% of females and 7.4% of males;

“insults or taunts of a sexual nature”: 3.2% of staff ‘once or twice’, females (14.9%), males (2.5%);

“intrusive questions or statements about your private life”: ‘once or twice’ by 6.8% of respondents, 17% of females and 6.2% of males. 8.5% of females report this has occurred ‘frequently’;

“display of posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature”: Overall 4% ‘once or twice’, 12.8% females, 3.5% males;

“sexually explicit emails or text messages”: 2.4% ‘once or twice’, female 6.4%, male 2%;

“inappropriate advances on social networking sites”: 0.6% of respondents ‘once or twice’, comprising 4.3% of females, and 0.1% of males;

“people accessing sexually explicit internet sites in their presence”: 2.4% have experienced this ‘once or twice’, 6.4% of female respondents and 2.2% of males;

“requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates”: 0.8% of respondents ‘once or twice’, comprising 10.6% of female respondents, and no males;

“behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications”: 1.6% once or twice, 8.5% of female respondents and 1.2% of males;

6.3 Did respondents who experienced potentially sexual harassing behaviours consider themselves to be sexually harassed?

“If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated ‘once or twice’ or ‘frequently’ to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?” Overall, 72.3% of respondents who experienced at least one of the above listed behaviours did not consider this behaviour to be sexual harassment, while 14.5% considered themselves to have been sexually harassed. 47.8% of females who experienced at least one of these behaviours said they did not consider it to be harassment, while 39.1% said they did. This translates into 19.1% of female respondents believing themselves to have been sexually harassed in one form or another during the course of their careers with the fire services, including 21.4% of non-operational female staff and 18.2% of female career firefighters.

6.4 Staff perceptions as to the acceptability of these behaviours

“In your opinion, how acceptable are these types of behaviours within the culture of the fire service?” Overall, 0.6% of respondents (comprising 3.8% of male non-operational staff and 0.5% of male firefighters) consider the behaviours listed in question 39 of the survey to be ‘widely and openly approved of’. 6.2% of staff (23.4% of females, 5.1% of males) consider it ‘disapproved of but often tolerated’. 29.8% of females and 33.9% of males consider it ‘disapproved of and generally not tolerated’, while 40.4% of females and 59.2% of males consider it ‘strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation’.

6.5 What would staff do if they were exposed to such behaviour?

“If something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?” In both services, the predominant view (56% overall) is to refer the matter up the chain of command, usually after a direct attempt to address the matter fails. The next largest cohort (33.7%) would deal with the matter personally and directly, without recourse to an official procedure. 3.7% of respondents overall would do nothing out of a belief that the organisation they work for has neither the will nor an effective process to fairly manage the issue.

6.6 Self-identification of perpetrators of potentially sexually harassing behaviours

“Have you knowingly risked offending, humiliating or intimidating a co-worker by”: [listing of sexually harassing behaviours used in section 6.2]. 4.3% of female respondents admit to staring and leering once or twice, while 6% of staff overall admit to making suggestive comments or jokes once or twice. We do not consider this a reliable indication of the prevalence of these behaviours.

6.7 Do perpetrators view disclosed behaviour as sexual harassment?

“Where you answered 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to doing any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?”. 6.5% of respondents admitted to perpetrating at least one behaviour, including 6.4% of females and 6.6% of males. 1.1% of males said ‘yes’, 5.1% said ‘no’, while all females said ‘no’.

6.8 Respondent opinion as to how best to minimise sexual harassment

“Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?” 885 staff made 1107 suggestions, primarily regular training and education (45.2%), immediate intervention, fair mediation and discipline (12.5%), maintaining current policy approach (5.5%), encourage immediate reporting (5.3%), make a collective commitment to not tolerate it, and to be respectful, professional and courteous (5%).

6.9 Concluding discussion on sexual harassment

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 33% of Australian women have been sexually harassed since the age of 15, and 25% of Australian women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past 5 years (AHRC, 2012:15). The close-knit teamwork and mutual reliance of firefighters strongly mitigates against this behaviour, but among the 885 fire service staff surveyed there are 24 men and women, firefighters and non-operational staff, who believe they have been sexually harassed during their careers, including 19% of the female respondents to this survey. In the 1107 suggestions for improving performance in this area, the great majority of respondents demonstrated their desire to better protect colleagues such as these from this form of abuse.

7 Opinion summary

Two free text comment sections collectively generated 522 comments from 400 comment makers. Comments varied significantly in length with many containing several distinct elements. Through a process of breaking these down into constituent parts, we derived 151 propositions that recurred with different frequencies among the comments. The top five most frequently expressed propositions are: (1) CFA/MFB management have not supported staff in the face of media attacks; (2) CFA/MFB Media and Liberal party attack has damaged morale and undermined mental health; (3) Standards should not be lowered to achieve higher female participation. Gender targets are wrong. Appointment should be based on merit not gender; (4) I do not trust or respect senior management / leadership; and (5) The main / only bullying I have seen is by senior managers of staff.

1. Background to the study

1.1 The establishment of the VEOHRC review

On December 15, two months after Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett received the 2015 Fire Services Review report, a Ministerial Working Group was established to determine the government's response to its recommendations (Garrett, 2015). It was at this time of strained and protracted negotiation with the United Firefighter's Union (UFU) over a new enterprise agreement, that the Minister's characterisation of the contents of the report appeared to take a strategic turn. While the report itself would not be released for a further three months, on the day that the working group was established an Associated Press article carried by several publications (News, Guardian, The Age) announced that 'A report into Victoria's firefighting services had revealed a culture of widespread bullying and sexism' (Zielinski, 2015).

The Minister announced she had requested the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner (VEOHRC), Kate Jenkins, to undertake a review of the fire services under section 151 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and section 41(c) of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (See: Appendix 2) to investigate and report on:

- support services for staff who have been bullied or harassed;
- workplace behaviour, specifically issues that may contribute to an environment of bullying and harassment;
- the lack of gender diversity in the fire services.

The Minister's statements in the APP report conflated bullying and gender diversity issues:

Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett says there is a 'significant lack of gender diversity in our fire services, with only three per cent of firefighters who are women.' She said submissions to the review revealed a culture of widespread bullying and discriminatory practices, as indicated by the low number of female firefighters (Zielinski, 2015).

This statement and several reiterations in the press conveyed an implication that the 'widespread bullying' was of women by men, made no distinction between career and volunteer firefighting ranks, and that the behaviour of firefighters was the problem. There was no reference to the bullying being about the poor treatment of firefighters by senior managers, for example.

The inference that the low numbers of women firefighters was indicative of misogynist attitudes among career firefighters was deeply offensive to many men and women fire service personnel. It did not acknowledge other possible explanations for the low gender diversity, which is a characteristic of fire services around the world. For example, there was no acknowledgement that people are brought up from childhood for generations to see this as a male preserve, so far fewer women see it as a career choice.

The inference (by juxtaposition) that the widespread bullying that had been occurring in the fire services was gender-related was immediately firmly rejected by female firefighter Emily Trimble who denounced the Minister's assertion in an interview with The Age: "If there is a culture of bullying it is not among firefighting ranks but with management and politics" (Willingham, 2015).

Her rebuttal was put to Minister Garrett in an interview on radio station 3AW the next day, who replied she was "concerned about those comments. It's probably a reflection that a lot has to change". As to the suggestion that the bullying related to "management and politics", she dismissed this as "a matter for Miss Trimble" (Bourke, 2015). This prompted Emily Trimble to call the station to say that following her rebuttal of the Minister's comments in The Age the previous day, 70 female firefighters had a phone hook-up during the day to vent their resentment at being used in this way by the Minister and to express absolute unanimity with the sentiment Ms Trimble had expressed.

I suppose it's pretty clear that she [Minister Garrett] is using us as a political step to take the focus off the EBA...

Jane Garrett has asked us to embrace this report - we don't even know what the report says. We only know what she says it says. And I know for one that she's [blanked by 3AW], OK? She may have spun it in a way that makes it right for her political agenda, but I don't know if you can tell by my voice that I am extremely emotional about this...

You know she's making the men sound like they're bigots and it's a boys club, and it's just not the facts. They're our friends, and she's talking them down, and how do the blokes feel about being put up there like that? It's just not right. I think she's got it all wrong, and I think she knows she's got it all wrong, but she just will not stop, she's just taken it too far (Bourke, 2015).

The Fire Service Review report 'Drawing a line, building stronger services', and the government's response to its recommendations, were finally released (five months after its delivery) on 16 March 2016, along with the government's response. The report contained no reference to 'sexism' (O'Byrne, 2016; GOV, 2016). The gender imbalance, reported in successive CFA and MFB annual reports over the years, was not a new revelation of the report, nor did the report connect references of bullying to gender diversity issues. The wider benefits of a more diverse workforce were properly espoused. The only connection between bullying and diversity was that the VEOHRC was to look at both matters.

1.2 The findings of the 2015 Fire Services Review pertaining to organisational culture

1.2.1 The volunteer relationship

Despite the focus that the Minister gave to these issues in statements she made in December 2015, and in subsequent media statements on gender diversity in the fire services, this and the other issues pertinent to the VEOHRC Review were not especially prominent in the findings of the Fire Services Review. More prominence was given to other matters of organisational culture, such as the relationship between the workforce and senior management, and between volunteers and paid firefighters, but issues such as bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination were also raised.

In explaining the tensions between career and volunteer firefighters it considered that personality issues had contributed to conflict within some integrated CFA brigades, which were compounded by a sense of alienation volunteers feel with the imposition of paid firefighters in what were hitherto volunteer-only domains.

Further tensions arise when volunteers have not been consulted on the move to integration, do not agree there is a need for integration, have not been given the opportunity to propose other options, or feel pushed aside in their own brigades. The VFBV 2014 Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey found that volunteers at integrated brigades are less satisfied with the way they are supported, utilised and respected than those in volunteer-only brigades (O'Byrne, 2016: 30).

The review attributed these tensions to an absence of leadership on the part of the CFA, arguing that management should be more attentive to the needs of brigades undergoing integration processes:

It is the role of the organisational leadership to create unity within its ranks. The Review heard constant references to the differences between paid and volunteer firefighters and very little language that promoted a common approach. This is a barrier to successful integration within the CFA and to interoperability within the fire services more broadly (O'Byrne, 2016: 30).

1.2.2 Bullying

The Review heard descriptions of a bullying culture in both CFA and MFB, at all levels of the organisation. The Review did not receive sufficient information to comment on the prevalence of such a culture but heard that many of those who experience bullying prefer to suffer in silence than make a claim (O'Byrne, 2016: 30).

Several references to bullying and intimidation were made in the firefighter submissions to the review relating to the bullying of operational staff by senior staff, and of union members by management in what is interpreted as retribution for actively supporting the work of their union. For example, several referred to threats made for using the organisation's email system to respond to anti-union assertions that management made through the email system.

1.2.3 Gender diversity

As at 30 June 2015, women made up only 3 per cent of paid firefighters and 15 per cent of volunteer firefighters in the CFA and only 4 per cent of firefighters in the MFB. There are no women in uniformed command roles and only a handful in executive leadership positions (O'Byrne, 2016: 31).

Creating a diverse organisation must be led from the top. There is also a particular role for brigade leaders to drive this change in terms of how they engage with their communities and the environment they create at the station. (O'Byrne, 2016: 31).

Referring to how the lack of trust in the reporting and intervention system reduces the willingness of women to raise issues of concern, as it does with issues all personnel wish to raise in relation to bullying and exclusion, the report effectively conflated two separate issues to imply women were being bullied and excluded, which implied it was by their male peers.

The Review heard that it can be difficult for women in the fire services to raise certain issues, particularly regarding behaviour towards them, and that the reprisals for doing so were often worse than the original offence. The same was said for those who were being bullied or excluded (O'Byrne, 2016:32).

1.2.4 Sexual harassment

While it is not remarkable that women trail-blazers who entered so hard and dirty a profession as firefighting encountered sceptics along the way who doubted their ability to do the work until seeing them doing it with their own eyes, this is implied to be somehow associated with sexual harassment and threatening behaviour.

Women and men in the fire services reported that women must work twice as hard to achieve the same level of acceptance as men. The Review also heard instances of sexual harassment and threatening behaviour. Other women indicated that they have not been targeted but that "you just had to keep your head down and get on with it." (O'Byrne, 2016: 32).

While there is nothing to indicate whether these are references to career or volunteer firefighters or non-operational staff, all new firefighters have a sense of having to prove themselves to the shifts they join, and we can assume that women entering such a hard, dirty, dangerous, and traditionally male profession as firefighting will sense that more acutely. But while this is a common experience of men and women firefighters, it is inappropriate that it should be associated with sexual harassment and intimidation as though they were degrees of the same phenomenon.

1.2.5 The obligation to provide a safe place to work

Addressing these issues, along with broader problems of bullying and harassment, is first and foremost a requirement of leadership (O’Byrne, 2016: 32).

Bullying was associated with gender by the Minister in her media briefing at the release of the report, and by proximity in the report, yet very few accounts of bullying in the submissions to the review were associated with gender discrimination or sexual harassment.

While the Fire Services Review report made the irrefutable point that “it is important that the fire services offer everyone a safe place to work” (O’Byrne, 2016: 32), the issue *most often raised in firefighter submissions* to the review was that the safety of male and female firefighters was being daily compromised by inadequate staffing levels on firefighting appliances. The Fire Services Review and the Minister who established its terms of reference, were both completely and conspicuously silent on this point.

1.2.6 The relationship between senior management and the workforce

It is evident to the Review that there is a serious and fundamental disconnect between the senior management and operational firefighters. In the case of MFB, this has become an almost uncrossable chasm (O’Byrne, 2016: 32).

The review proposed a major overhaul of the boards and management to reset the relationship with staff, given the complete collapse of trust in the leadership of these organisations. The minister rejected recommendations for major structural reform of the CFA and MFB boards and executive leadership (GOV, 2016: 3).

1.3 The VEOHRC review

In their submissions to the 2015 Fire Services Review Career firefighters and non-operational staff of the CFA and MFB demonstrated their desire to reform deeply demoralizing aspects of the cultures of the organisations to which they belong, particularly given the aggressive industrial relations climate in which they have operated over several years.

There, as in this survey, they consistently report feeling alienated from their senior management and demoralised by the dishonest public vilification they have endured during enterprise bargaining periods and particularly during this year's federal election campaign.

They have been relentlessly attacked by Victorian Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) whose nominees occupy nearly half the seats on the CFA board, and who firefighters believe fuelled volunteer and public hatred toward them, and abetted their vilification by the Liberal-National parties and their allies in the media over the past year.

The hostility of their employers toward them, and the low regard that they feel is shown toward their health and safety, has serious implications for the capacity of firefighters to manage the stress of their dangerous and often confronting work. The lack of trust in senior management undermines their expectation of being treated with fairness and impartiality by their organisation’s Human Resources areas and complaint systems, when issues of workplace behaviour arise.

Comments made by the then Minister at the height of an inflamed industrial dispute, where she suggested sexual harassment was rife in the fire services, and implied misogynist attitudes prevailed on the part of firefighters, were deeply offensive to many staff. Women firefighters publicly expressed their outrage. Those that publicly commented said that bullying is widespread, not among firefighters, not between men and women, but is directed at firefighters by senior managers and politicians.

Operational and non-operational fire services staff wish to have their views clearly heard on a range of matters pertinent to the present VEOHRC review, and the UFU have sought to facilitate their participation through this study.

1.4 The UFU members survey

The UFU commissioned this survey of its members to record their experiences to determine the nature and extent of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment during their employment with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Brigade (MFB). The information from this study is intended to form the basis of the union's submissions to inquiries and to underpin its negotiation of organisational reforms within the fire services.

An online survey was administered by Economic Outlook Pty Ltd, with the actual survey instrument designed by Dr Victor Quirk, an independent social scientist. The survey process was designed to ensure the non-identification of respondents through a double-blind approach.

Given the sensitivity of the subject matter and the need to ensure the independence of its findings, a key priority was to safeguard the privacy of respondents to the survey, including in relation to the union which commissioned it.

The survey instrument was built with Google Forms proprietary software and was accessed on a webpage administered by Economic Outlook. Submissions were restricted to members of the UFU, whether performing as career firefighters or in other roles within the two fire services. To prevent multiple submission by any individual, while preserving the anonymity of respondents, a sequence of 3100 unique randomly generated seven digit log-in numbers were provided by Economic Outlook to the UFU for distribution to individual members. 892 individual submissions were received of which seven were excluded due to their log-in numbers bearing no resemblance to those issued.

By contractual agreement, raw data generated by the survey remains the property of the Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofFEE), Newcastle, once having been compiled by Economic Outlook, and will be provided to the UFU only in the form of aggregated data and reports. Neither Economic Outlook nor CofFEE were supplied with the names or email addresses of those submitting.

The remaining 885 survey submissions were subsequently subjected to analysis and 142 data tables were generated.

1.5 Survey design considerations

Advice by the Union as to the general attitudes of its members to being surveyed indicated that the instrument should be as succinct as possible to maximise the response rate. As it is, around 3100 members were issued with invitations and individual log-in numbers, so the 885 valid responses represents a 29% response rate. Of the 885 respondents, 47 were female, representing 5.3% of the sample, roughly proportional to their representation within the fire services.

In order to preserve respondent anonymity by preventing the recognition of individuals within small cohorts, while still publishing the responses they have provided, some tabular information has been redacted from publication in relation to certain issues. Persons who are of non-specific gender, a very small cohort, are not identified in many tables indicating gender, though their responses are included in all aggregates. We have foregone publishing some tables concerning age category, or length of service, where some other small cohorts are present.

Table 1 Overall role and gender profile of survey respondents

Gender and roles of respondents by service		All respondents			Non-operational staff				Career firefighters			
		Female	Male	Non-Gender specific	Total	Female	Male	Non-Gender specific	Total	Female	Male	Non-Gender specific
CFA	41.9	4.9	95.1	0.0	7.0	23.1	76.9	0.0	93.0	3.5	96.5	0.0
MFB	58.1	5.6	93.8	0.6	2.9	53.3	40.0	6.7	97.1	4.2	95.4	0.4
Both services	100.0	5.3	94.4	0.3	4.6	34.1	63.4	2.4	95.4	3.9	95.9	0.2

Table 1 presents the sample population by service, gender and role. 41.9% of the sample are employed at the CFA and 58.1% with the MFB. Career firefighters represent 95.4% of the sample, with non-operational staff constituting 4.6%. Females comprise 5.3%, males 94.4% and persons of non-specific gender 0.6%. A larger proportion of MFB operational and non-operational respondents are female compared to CFA respondents.

Table 2 presents the same sample population by length of service. The most striking feature of the fire services population is the uncommonly high number of people with long periods of service. 56% of respondents have more than 10 years of service. Around 35% have more than 20 years of service.

Table 2 Length of service profile of survey respondents

All respondents by length of service	All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Female	5.3	5.7	4.3	8.6	10.0	11.7	10.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Male	94.4	94.3	94.2	91.4	90.0	87.0	90.0	98.5	100.0	100.0
Non gender specific	0.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9

Table 3 presents the survey population by age category. Consistent with the longevity of service of firefighters, and skewed by the legacy of recruitment freezes during the period of the Kennett government in the 1990s the fire services population is significantly mature, as reflected in the survey sample. 59% of the workforce are over 40 years of age, while 36% are over 50.

Table 3 Age profile of respondents

All respondents by age	All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Female	5.3	0.0	3.7	7.0	8.0	5.0	7.5	5.6	0.8	4.7
Male	94.4	100.0	96.3	92.2	91.2	94.1	92.5	94.4	99.2	95.3
Non gender specific	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9

Information was not sought from respondents that could potentially expose a respondent's identity, such as the location of their workplace, their rank or specialised role. The only demographic characteristics recorded were: gender; which fire service they worked for; length of service category; age category; indigeneity; nation of birth category; and childhood language group.

The main challenge of this study has been to decide on definitions of the behaviour under examination that did not entail lengthy passages of reading to explain their nuance, and yet meaningfully engaged the respondents to solicit detail in their responses.

Two common forms of inquiry were adopted. With relation to discrimination and sexual harassment we used a behavioural experience method where respondents were asked to record their experience of behaviours defined in the question. A self-labelling method was employed in relation to bullying, whereby respondents were provided an explanatory description of bullying and asked to relate it to what they had observed and experienced (Neilson, et.al, 2010: 958).

Issues of discrimination were explored in relation to protected attributes identified under the Victorian Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Act (EEO, 2010). People indicating that they felt they had been adversely treated because of their association with one of these attributes were also invited to provide free text explanations of the nature of their adverse treatment.

The prevalence of sexual harassment was explored through a list of behaviours identified by the Australian Human Rights Commission as potentially constituting workplace sexual harassment. Respondents were asked to identify if they had experienced such behaviours, whether ‘once or twice’, ‘frequently’, or never, whether they considered their experience constituted sexual harassment and whether they had themselves perpetrated such behaviours. Respondents were also asked what they would do if confronted with such behaviours, and for their opinion as to how the issue should be addressed as an organisation.

Bullying was explored from the perspective of what the respondent had experienced and what they had observed of the bullying of others. Characteristics were explored such as the relative organisational position of those they considered the primary perpetrator(s), what occurred, how long it lasted, whether and how it resolved, why they believe the person was targeted, whether or not they pursued a formal complaints process, their faith in available complaints processes, and options for comment. A more detailed discussion of the issues of defining and measuring bullying is provided in section 4.

A series of statements were included to solicit the attitudes of respondents to several topical issues. These included two observations of the prevailing mood of staff contained in the 2015 Fire Services Review report, questions clarifying the attitude of firefighters to initiatives aimed at increasing female representation among their ranks, and the impact on morale of recent industrial tension. A free-text question inviting further comment concluded this section.

A final free-text section invited comment on anything covered in the survey.

1.6 Limitations

Because this was not a randomised sample, in that only members of the United Fire Fighters Union were invited to participate, and those that did participate self-selected to do so, we cannot precisely measure the generalised prevalence throughout the fire service of any phenomenon under consideration through this method. This is a well-recognised and common problem in this field, and generally considered to produce high prevalence estimates:

Although, from a theoretical perspective, it is possible that non-random samples may lead to both higher and lower prevalence rates than random samples, prior empirical findings indicate that non-random sampling leads to higher levels of bullying and harassment when comparing with random sampling techniques (Ilies et al., 2003; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2008). Hence, the arguments for lower prevalence in non-random samples seem to be outweighed by the arguments for higher prevalence rates. (Nielsen et al, 2010: 961).

It can be argued that overestimating the prevalence of dysfunctional behaviours in a workplace is preferable to under-estimating them, in that in doing so we are more likely to identify a wider range of situations that we would wish future policy to address. As the main aim of this research

is to inform policy makers of the substantive characteristics of these behaviours, as opposed to solely determining their prevalence in relation to an arbitrary benchmark, we considered the method adopted here to have the most practical merit.

While a 29% response rate is sufficient to draw several key conclusions with a satisfactory degree of reliability, a larger sample would have been very useful in terms of permitting greater interrogation of smaller segments of the fire services population. We have endeavoured to provide different permutations of the data, including comments and issues raised in several free-text options for comment.

In not confining citations of behaviour to those experienced in the past 6 months or 5 years, etc, an opportunity for commensurability with other studies in this area may have been lost, but the inability to ensure memories are confined to that time-frame, and the denial of an opportunity for longer serving members to describe experiences whose impacts are still evidently deeply felt, despite the passage of time, tended to argue for a more comprehensive account of what staff have experienced. Given inevitable differences in the sequencing and phrasing of questions among studies, and differences in the social climates in which studies are conducted, issues of incommensurability inevitably arise, in any case.

Victoria's fire services personnel have been under enormous emotional stress as a consequence of the sustained industrial and political conflicts of recent years, and their patience and diligence in participating in this survey, and addressing these confronting issues as candidly as they have is very deeply appreciated and respected.

2. Staff morale and attitudes

2.1 Industrial dispute

In his report, the 2015 Fire Services Review Commissioner Mr David O'Byrne found:

Whatever the motivations for them, it is undeniable that the industrial disputes during the term of the previous government, particularly the CFA Recruits Case and the MFB Termination Case, have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale, with many commenting that morale is at its lowest in decades in both organisations. It seems that many paid firefighters experienced the litigation as a personal attack on their pay and conditions, creating anxiety, uncertainty, anger, frustration and a strong sense of betrayal by their own organisation (O'Byrne, 2016: 33)

This proposition was put to respondents to determine the extent to which it currently captured the attitude of the fire services staff. The results are presented in tables 4 - 6.

Table 4 Impact on morale of industrial cases mounted by the CFA and MFB against their workforces

The industrial disputes during the term of the previous government, particularly the CFA Recruits Case and the MFB Termination Case, have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	71.1	57.4	71.9	48.8	50.0	46.2	72.2	60.6	72.7
	Mostly agree	19.0	21.3	18.8	26.8	14.3	34.6	18.6	24.2	18.3
	No opinion / neutral	6.1	17.0	5.5	17.1	28.6	11.5	5.6	12.1	5.3
	Mostly disagree	1.2	2.1	1.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2
	Strongly disagree	2.6	2.1	2.6	4.9	0.0	7.7	2.5	3.0	2.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	56.7	33.3	57.9	38.5	33.3	40.0	58.1	33.3	59.0
	Mostly agree	27.7	27.8	27.7	26.9	0.0	35.0	27.7	41.7	27.2
	No opinion / neutral	9.7	27.8	8.8	23.1	50.0	15.0	8.7	16.7	8.4
	Mostly disagree	2.7	5.6	2.5	3.8	16.7	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Strongly disagree	3.2	5.6	3.1	7.7	0.0	10.0	2.9	8.3	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	81.5	72.4	82.2	66.7	62.5	66.7	82.0	76.2	82.4
	Mostly agree	12.6	17.2	12.2	26.7	25.0	33.3	12.2	14.3	12.0
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	10.3	3.1	6.7	12.5	0.0	3.4	9.5	3.2
	Mostly disagree	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Strongly disagree	2.1	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Overall, 90.1% of respondents agreed with the proposition, 6.1% were non-committal, and 3.8% disagreed. Non-operational staff were less supportive of the proposition, with 75.6% agreeing, 17.1% non-committal and 7.3% disagreeing, compared to 90.8% of firefighters agreeing, 5.6% non-committal and 3.7% disagreeing. Males in both roles were generally more likely to agree with the proposition than were women, with 64.3% of non-operational females agreeing, 28.6% neutral 7.1% disagreeing, compared to 80.8%, 11.5% and 7.7% of non-operational males. Women firefighters were 84.8% in agreement, 12.1% neutral and 3% disagreed, while 91% of male firefighters agreed, 5.3% were neutral and 3.7% disagreed. The sentiment was stronger among MFB staff, in that 94.2% supported the proposition compared to 84.4% of the CFA respondents.

MFB staff in every length of service cohort (Table 5) are in moderately stronger agreement with the proposition than their CFA counterparts, with CFA staff with around 20-25 years of service

the least likely to agree, while those in the next highest cohort the most likely. CFA respondents over 55 (Table 6) were the most ambivalent, while their MFB counterparts were the least so.

The view of the Fire Services Commissioner is clearly borne out in this data, for despite some variation respondents are substantially in agreement with the proposition.

Table 5 Impact on morale of industrial cases mounted by the CFA and MFB against their workforces by length of service

The industrial disputes during the term of the previous government, particularly the CFA Recruits Case and the MFB Termination Case, have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
	Strongly agree	71.1	42.5	81.3	72.0	72.7	67.5	50.0	86.7	78.9	86.0
	Mostly agree	19.0	38.8	13.7	17.2	18.2	20.8	20.0	11.1	11.9	7.0
	No opinion / neutral	6.1	15.6	2.9	4.3	6.4	5.2	15.0	1.5	3.7	2.3
	Mostly disagree	1.2	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.0	10.0	0.7	0.9	4.7
	Strongly disagree	2.6	1.9	1.4	5.4	1.8	6.5	5.0	0.0	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	56.7	39.2	71.4	53.5	63.9	63.0	47.1	75.0	63.6	62.5
	Mostly agree	27.7	44.1	18.4	30.2	24.6	23.9	17.6	20.8	9.1	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	9.7	12.7	6.1	7.0	9.8	6.5	17.6	0.0	18.2	12.5
	Mostly disagree	2.7	1.0	2.0	2.3	1.6	0.0	11.8	4.2	4.5	25.0
	Strongly disagree	3.2	2.9	2.0	7.0	0.0	6.5	5.9	0.0	4.5	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	81.5	48.3	86.7	88.0	83.7	74.2	66.7	89.2	82.8	91.4
	Mostly agree	12.6	29.3	11.1	6.0	10.2	16.1	33.3	9.0	12.6	8.6
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	20.7	1.1	2.0	2.0	3.2	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.2	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.1	0.0	1.1	4.0	4.1	6.5	0.0	0.0	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

Table 6 Impact on morale of industrial cases mounted by the CFA and MFB against their workforces by age category

The industrial disputes during the term of the previous government, particularly the CFA Recruits Case and the MFB Termination Case, have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	71.1	55.6	63.4	66.4	63.0	72.3	75.3	79.0	76.3	74.4
	Mostly agree	19.0	33.3	25.6	21.9	24.6	18.5	17.2	13.3	14.5	14.0
	No opinion / neutral	6.1	11.1	8.5	8.6	8.0	5.0	2.2	4.9	4.6	7.0
	Mostly disagree	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.2	1.7	1.1	0.7	1.5	2.3
	Strongly disagree	2.6	0.0	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.5	4.3	2.1	3.1	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	56.7	50.0	57.7	56.5	58.3	56.9	63.6	54.3	50.0	46.2
	Mostly agree	27.7	33.3	32.7	30.6	25.0	29.3	27.3	31.4	16.7	15.4
	No opinion / neutral	9.7	16.7	7.7	8.1	11.1	8.6	2.3	8.6	20.0	23.1
	Mostly disagree	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	3.4	2.3	2.9	6.7	7.7
	Strongly disagree	3.2	0.0	1.9	4.8	1.4	1.7	4.5	2.9	6.7	7.7
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	81.5	66.7	73.3	75.8	68.2	86.9	85.7	87.0	84.2	86.7
	Mostly agree	12.6	33.3	13.3	13.6	24.2	8.2	8.2	7.4	13.9	13.3
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	0.0	10.0	9.1	4.5	1.6	2.0	3.7	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.1	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.0	3.3	4.1	1.9	2.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

2.2 The desire for a better workplace culture

The Fire Services Review commissioner also reported:

It is abundantly clear that the workforce has had enough of this negative environment and simply wants to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where its efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability. Significant change is required and a new chapter should be launched. (O’Byrne , 2016: 34).

Respondents were thus asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposition:

“As a firefighter / fire service officer I have had enough of this negative environment and simply want to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where my efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability”.

Again, the survey recorded strong endorsement of this observation.

Table 7 presents responses to the proposition by service, gender and role, with 95.3% agreeing overall, and 3.5% disagreeing. Proportionally more females agree (97.9%) than males (95.1%), with 3.7% of males disagreeing. Since no respondents who disagreed with the proposition offered comment as to their objection to it, it is possible that some of these did so by mistake, intending to have signified agreement. Comments elsewhere in the survey by two respondents stated they almost clicked on the wrong button in the agree / disagree section.

Table 7 Opinion on proposition that staff have had enough of the negativity surrounding their workplace by service, gender and role

As a firefighter / fire service officer I have had enough of this negative environment and simply want to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where my efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	88.9	87.2	89.0	73.2	71.4	73.1	89.7	93.9	89.5
	Mostly agree	6.3	10.6	6.1	9.8	21.4	3.8	6.2	6.1	6.2
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	2.1	1.2	12.2	7.1	15.4	0.7	0.0	0.7
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.4	2.4	0.0	3.8	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Strongly disagree	3.2	0.0	3.3	2.4	0.0	3.8	3.2	0.0	3.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	86.3	83.3	86.4	65.4	66.7	65.0	87.9	91.7	87.7
	Mostly agree	7.3	16.7	6.8	11.5	33.3	5.0	6.9	8.3	6.9
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	0.0	2.0	15.4	0.0	20.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	Mostly disagree	0.5	0.0	0.6	3.8	0.0	5.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Strongly disagree	4.0	0.0	4.2	3.8	0.0	5.0	4.0	0.0	4.2
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	90.9	89.7	90.9	86.7	75.0	100.0	91.0	95.2	90.8
	Mostly agree	5.6	6.9	5.6	6.7	12.5	0.0	5.6	4.8	5.7
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	3.4	0.6	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Mostly disagree	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 8 reports responses in terms of length of service. A minimum of 90% of staff agree (mostly or strongly) with the proposition across all length of service cohorts. It is possible that some of the people choosing to 'strongly disagree' (eg 9.3% of CFA firefighters with 6 – 10 years of service, 12.5% with 35+ years of service) did so in error, in that they offer no explanatory comment to suggest what they find objectionable to it.

Table 8 Opinion on proposition that staff have had enough of the negativity surrounding their workplace by length of service.

As a firefighter / fire service officer I have had enough of this negative environment and simply want to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where my efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Strongly agree	88.9	80.6	95.0	91.4	89.1	89.6	70.0	94.1	88.1	88.4
	Mostly agree	6.3	14.4	1.4	2.2	5.5	2.6	20.0	5.2	6.4	7.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	1.3	0.7	0.0	2.7	2.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.2	3.1	2.2	6.5	2.7	3.9	0.0	0.7	5.5	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	86.3	83.3	91.8	88.4	88.5	89.1	64.7	91.7	81.8	87.5
	Mostly agree	7.3	10.8	2.0	2.3	8.2	2.2	23.5	8.3	9.1	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	4.3	11.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.5	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	4.9	4.1	9.3	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	9.1	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	90.9	75.9	96.7	94.0	89.8	90.3	100.0	94.6	89.7	88.6
	Mostly agree	5.6	20.7	1.1	2.0	2.0	3.2	0.0	4.5	5.7	8.6
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	1.7	1.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
	Mostly disagree	0.2	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	1.1	4.0	6.1	6.5	0.0	0.9	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 9 relates the data to respondent age cohort, and demonstrates a consistent distribution of support, neutrality and opposition to the proposition, with over 90% agreement (strongly or mostly) across all age cohorts.

Table 9 Opinion on proposition that staff have had enough of the negativity surrounding their workplace by age group

As a firefighter / fire service officer I have had enough of this negative environment and simply want to work in a safe, harmonious and supportive workplace where my efforts are acknowledged and there is clear and fair accountability		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	88.9	66.7	90.2	87.5	89.9	89.9	91.4	89.5	85.5	93.0
	Mostly agree	6.3	33.3	6.1	7.8	5.1	4.2	4.3	6.3	7.6	7.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.7	1.7	0.0	1.4	3.1	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.2	0.0	3.7	3.1	4.3	3.4	3.2	2.1	3.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	86.3	66.7	90.4	88.7	90.3	84.5	88.6	77.1	73.3	100.0
	Mostly agree	7.3	33.3	5.8	3.2	5.6	6.9	6.8	17.1	10.0	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.9	10.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	0.0	3.8	6.5	4.2	3.4	2.3	2.9	6.7	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	90.9	66.7	90.0	86.4	89.4	95.1	93.9	93.5	89.1	90.0
	Mostly agree	5.6	33.3	6.7	12.1	4.5	1.6	2.0	2.8	6.9	10.0
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	4.5	3.3	4.1	1.9	3.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

2.3 Media coverage of the enterprise agreement

2.3.1 Opinion survey on media coverage

Firefighters have frequently commented (see Section 2.3.1) in this survey that certain sections of the media, working in concert with the VFBV, propagated a dishonest and biased account of issues under discussion in the enterprise agreement negotiation, and vilified career firefighters as “greedy” and “thugs” because they argued for safer working conditions and demanded they have a say, through their union, over the quality of the equipment they are expected to use.

This campaign to demonise career firefighters in the public mind has jeopardised the safety of firefighters who report more abuse and violent aggression from members of the public when responding to emergencies. Perhaps more profoundly, it has been emotionally undermining for some given that their motivation to be firefighters was influenced by the positive regard in which their profession was held, and their sense of being valued as protectors of the community. The campaign of vilification they experienced has prompted many to declare they are thinking about leaving the profession.

Table 10 reports the extent to which respondents agreed / disagreed with the proposition:

‘As a fire service employee, to what extent do you agree with these statements: The recent media coverage of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement has had a profoundly damaging effect on morale’.

Overall, 95.5% of respondents agreed with the proposition, men (88.8%) more ‘strongly’ than women (78.7%), who were more ‘mostly’ in agreement (12.8% vs 6.9%). Women were also

significantly more likely to have ‘no opinion’. Non-operational staff (80.5%) were less likely to agree overall than firefighters (96.2%).

Table 10 Opinion: Impact of recent media coverage over enterprise agreement on morale – by service, gender and role.

The recent media coverage of the Enterprise Agreement has had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Strongly agree	88.3	78.7	88.8	61.0	64.3	57.7	89.6	84.8	89.8
	Mostly agree	7.2	12.8	6.9	19.5	14.3	23.1	6.6	12.1	6.4
	No opinion / neutral	0.9	8.5	0.5	9.8	21.4	3.8	0.5	3.0	0.4
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.4	2.4	0.0	3.8	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Strongly disagree	3.3	0.0	3.5	7.3	0.0	11.5	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	87.4	72.2	88.1	69.2	83.3	65.0	88.7	66.7	89.5
	Mostly agree	7.5	16.7	7.1	15.4	0.0	20.0	6.9	25.0	6.3
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	11.1	0.3	3.8	16.7	0.0	0.6	8.3	0.3
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.3	3.8	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	0.0	4.2	7.7	0.0	10.0	3.8	0.0	3.9
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	88.9	82.8	89.2	46.7	50.0	33.3	90.2	95.2	89.9
	Mostly agree	7.0	10.3	6.8	26.7	25.0	33.3	6.4	4.8	6.5
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	6.9	0.6	20.0	25.0	16.7	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Mostly disagree	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Strongly disagree	2.7	0.0	2.9	6.7	0.0	16.7	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Staff of the MFB (95.9%) and CFA (94.9%) have similar levels of agreement with the proposition, with women career firefighters in both services being far more inclined to ‘mostly’ agree or be neutral than their male counterparts.

Table 11 considers responses in relation to length of service showing considerable consistency of agreement across all cohorts. Table 12 shows similar consistency of agreement across age cohorts for both services.

Table 11 Impact of recent media coverage over enterprise agreement on morale – by length of service

The recent media coverage of the Enterprise Agreement has had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Strongly agree	88.3	82.5	89.9	82.8	90.9	89.6	85.0	92.6	88.1	95.3
	Mostly agree	7.2	11.9	5.8	11.8	4.5	3.9	10.0	6.7	5.5	2.3
	No opinion / neutral	0.9	2.5	0.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.3	2.5	2.9	5.4	1.8	6.5	0.0	0.7	6.4	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	87.4	85.3	87.8	76.7	91.8	91.3	88.2	91.7	90.9	87.5
	Mostly agree	7.5	8.8	6.1	16.3	6.6	2.2	11.8	8.3	0.0	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	3.9	4.1	7.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	9.1	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	88.9	77.6	91.1	88.0	89.8	87.1	66.7	92.8	87.4	97.1
	Mostly agree	7.0	17.2	5.6	8.0	2.0	6.5	0.0	6.3	6.9	2.9
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	3.4	1.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.7	0.0	2.2	4.0	4.1	6.5	0.0	0.9	5.7	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 12 Opinion: Impact of recent media coverage over enterprise agreement on morale – by age

The recent media coverage of the Enterprise Agreement has had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	88.3	88.9	93.9	87.5	81.9	90.8	90.3	88.1	87.0	93.0
	Mostly agree	7.2	11.1	3.7	9.4	11.6	4.2	4.3	8.4	6.9	4.7
	No opinion / neutral	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.9	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.0	2.3
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.3	0.0	2.4	2.3	3.6	3.4	4.3	2.1	6.1	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	87.4	83.3	94.2	85.5	83.3	87.9	93.2	80.0	83.3	100.0
	Mostly agree	7.5	16.7	3.8	9.7	9.7	6.9	0.0	17.1	6.7	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	0.0	1.9	4.8	4.2	3.4	4.5	2.9	10.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	88.9	100.0	93.3	89.4	80.3	93.4	87.8	90.7	88.1	90.0
	Mostly agree	7.0	0.0	3.3	9.1	13.6	1.6	8.2	5.6	6.9	6.7
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	3.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3
	Mostly disagree	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.7	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.0	3.3	4.1	1.9	5.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

2.3.2 Comments associated with the impact of media coverage of recent industrial issues

The comments made in free text parts of the survey may or may not reflect commonly held positions. They can only be considered reflective of the views of the people that made them. Nevertheless, they provide an opportunity to understand how some fire service personnel frame the issues we are seeking to explain through this data, and perhaps indicate the strength of feeling that is out there which prompted these survey respondents to make them.

There are strong feelings expressed in comments as to the fairness and honesty of media coverage of recent industrial negotiations and other issues raised in the months leading up to the federal election. These comments explore the impact of media coverage on stress levels both at work and at home, and increased risks associated with dealing with the public when responding to emergencies.

Just in general everyone on station has had enough of the slanderous coverage that has been made about us as firefighters about our EBA negotiations, workplace bullying, recruitment policies etc. It is all uninformed and outright incorrect information that is being fed to the public by self serving ministers, reporters etc and we have all had enough. (MFB, male, FF)

The media attack on my profession has had an incredibly damaging effect on myself and a large percentage of my work colleagues. I have felt angry and hurt by the media attack and the attack on my profession from some volunteers and volunteer brigades. I have been disappointed by the lack of support from MFB management during these attacks. I have witnessed some of my work colleagues visibly upset by these continued attacks from the media and volunteers. Also the public backlash due to the lack of understanding by the public in the matter of the EBA has also affected me and my work colleagues. (MFB, male, FF)

Management have abandoned career firefighters and have attacked us at every opportunity. Media outlets have been allowed to run false stories painting career firefighters in a very poor light, and as a result out in public firefighters have faced all sorts of public questioning and in some cases threats. In that time management were silent. The volunteer association and volunteer members have been empowered to attack career firefighters and spread misinformation via social media and in public without any form of disciplinary action from the then Chief Fire Officer or CEO. Furthermore personal attacks on career firefighters from volunteer members on social media have been disgraceful. It is/ was terribly clear that management and some volunteer members had/ have total hatred for professional career firefighters. This has lead to poor morale across most stations. (CFA, male, FF)

The constant misinformed media campaign against CFA/MFB career staff has caused the lowest morale I can recall and divided the CFA like never before. (CFA, male, FF)

Personally the attacks on firefighters from the Herald Sun and other media platforms such as Facebook have really affected my morale and ability to work at my full potential. (CFA, male, FF)

Management need a good hard look at themselves and the damage they and the governments have done and are doing to our organisation. It is disgraceful to not backup your employees and allow public and media lies and spin to affect us in the way it has a lot of it just to gain political points. (MFB, male, FF)

It has been a joke that the media, management, MFB, VFBV and volunteers have not been held accountable for the past 4 years worth of stuff they have done to career firefighters and our families. (CFA, male, FF)

As a career firefighter of 31 years I have never been so devastated by the continued attack in the media containing lies and untruths and the lack of support by senior management at the MFB. It has got to the stage I just want to leave and find another job. (MFB, male, FF)

They are particularly critical of the role of the media and politicians in vilifying firefighters in pursuit of their own political ambitions:

The Liberal Party, Herald Sun and 3AW hate filled hatchet job have ensured that if requested to speak to them for anything operationally related, I will be rejecting such requests and dealing only with other media/representative bodies. (MFB, male, FF)

Liberal party lies have turned the general public against hard working firefighters. They should be held accountable, and a request made for a public apology. Otherwise be held responsible if anyone suffering PTSD takes their lives. The impact the lies from Liberals and the VFBV has had is enormous, people do not enjoy attending work anymore. Volunteers are also feeling the impact, they feel responsible and embarrassed. (CFA, male, FF)

The politicians need to stop using firefighters for political gain! This recent barrage of anti-firefighter rhetoric was nothing short of sickening and demoralising! It has had horrific impacts on the mental health of firefighters through what was published in the Herald Sun. Many firefighters became suicidal in the face of this defamation and attack. Nobody but the UFU came to the defence of staff firefighters. The journalists, executive and politicians should be held accountable for the trauma they caused! (MFB, male, FF)

The behaviour of certain media outlets and members of parliament during this time have caused serious harm to many of my colleagues and their families and should be held to account for their blatant lies and inflammatory statements. (MFB, male, FF)

I would also like to see some sort of controls on the media and what they can print/say. It seems like if they feel like it they can tap your phone, abduct children and print or say whatever they like and the community just puts up with the lies and buys more of it. If my child behaved the way the media does this would not be tolerated. My child would be taught how to behave. There are consequences and reactions to what the media prints, says and does. I do not think the behaviour of our media outlets is appropriate or balanced let alone a good example for how we should all treat each other with dignity and respect. (MFB, male, FF)

Would love to see a class action taken against lying journalists. (MFB, male, FF)

The media campaign has ensured that I neither purchase a newspaper, watch the news nor like to discuss my job outside of work with friends and family. I limit my social media time as mention of work issues greatly upset and infuriate me. (MFB, male, FF)

I cancelled my subscription to the Herald Sun due to the continual one sided coverage and mistruths printed and written by James Campbell and other Herald Sun media personal. (MFB, male, FF)

The provision of misinformation to media outlets is a continuing saga. (MFB, male, FF)

I don't understand how the media is allowed to get away with all the lies they are disseminating in the community and how senior management are not intervening on this harassment. (CFA, male, FF)

The MFB and CFA EBAs should not be used as political footballs. It is an absolute disgrace that our chosen career of providing public emergency response becomes a front page reporting issue which most of the general public don't have any idea about and aren't interested in the beat up press hype. (MFB, male, FF)

The failure of senior management and the boards to defend the reputations of firefighters when they were aware of distorted accounts of issues circulating in the media has been deeply offensive to many firefighters.

The lack of perceived support from our senior managers/officers has probably been the most disappointing aspect to this whole dispute. Good leaders support and stand by their staff, not undermine or lead by absence. (MFB, male, FF)

As a new employee to the emergency services sector (<12months), I feel the recent media coverage & negative perception of career firefighters generated as a result has damaged morale beyond the point of no return. The distinct lack of any form of leadership from senior management in the face of continued attacks by media, clearly inaccurate, has been shocking compared to how similar issues have been handled in my previous career. I feel desperate for those who have been in the role far longer than I have, who continue to go to work serving the community in spite of this attitude towards them. I hope the future of the organisation I work for is far brighter than it's current and past. (CFA, male, FF)

A lot of the bullying by members of the public could have been stopped by management as the bullying was related to untruths printed in the media which management was aware of and did nothing to correct. This is more than anything else has left me wondering what managements agenda is when they are willingly allowing members to be bullied by media and the public over knowingly misleading and at times false information. (MFB, male, FF)

The inaction of management to address the constant harassment and attacks by volunteers on social media, and other avenues is a direct result of why such morale in the CFA is at rock bottom. I have never not been proud to wear my uniform in public, however during the EBA / Fed Election campaign run by the Liberal party along with VFBV under the guise of Save the CFA has done nothing but erode relationships between Career staff and volunteers (CFA, male, FF)

The hurtful lies that have been printed in the media as part of the recent political campaign have caused me and my family extreme amounts of stress. I find it hard to stomach that MFB or CFA management didn't step in at any point in time to try and correct some of the blatant lies that were being published. I have had friends, family and acquaintances constantly asking me to justify myself and my job over and over after they have been fed false, misleading and damaging information. All I have done in my time at the MFB is work hard and treat others with respect. I feel like the political campaign is throwing that right back in my face. (MFB, male, FF)

The Herald Sun campaign went un-answered and it damaged morale, I think, irreparably. Some managers need to walk or be pushed so we can move forward. (MFB, male, FF)

The fact that at no time did senior management appear to help defend me/us in relation to the media slur indicates to me that we are of little importance to them and their selfish actions was in a way a covert style of bullying. (MFB, male, FF)

MFB management have not supported Firefighters, even when they know the above matters are affecting personal and public perception. There has been no leadership, or correction of untrue reporting and government statements. (MFB, male, FF)

The constant negative press, CFA refusing to correct the lies and volunteers not being disciplined has morale at the lowest point that I have seen in 29 years. (CFA, male, FF)

Not only have the political campaigns against our EBA affected morale, it has affected me almost daily through the untruthful lies being printed in the media, the lack of support from senior management in protecting our reputation and the public perception that we are union thugs. I have never experienced such a difficult time in my working career and am disappointed with the lack of leadership and support from my employer. (MFB, male, FF)

There appears to have been no support from management in regards to the relentless attack on career firefighters and the mistruths put forward by volunteers and the media. (MFB, male, FF)

The public attacks through several media outlets have been disgraceful and has had a profound effect on morale over the past 8-12 months. No leadership from our former CFA board on several issues, this could have simply been put to rest if these issues were straightened out in the proper public forum. (CFA, male, FF)

The current environment and lack of support and CFA not correcting lies told by the media personally has taken its toll on me to a point a few weeks ago that the stress built up and started to affect my health and my family life. (CFA, male, FF)

I find it unbelievable the amount of blatant lies printed in the media yet there seems to be no accountability for this. The lack of leadership from the president and chief officer leaves me with no confidence in them what so ever, they should be setting the record straight and looking after the brigade yet seem to enjoy the fact that the MFB brand is being trashed. (MFB, male, FF)

I feel the relative silence by the previous board, CO and CEO to shoot down inaccuracies being sold in the media and creating their own to be the most hurtful in the EBA dispute. They seemed to be more about being against career firefighters personally than they were standing firm on their EBA ideology. I understand their position is to get the best outcome for CFA, but this was being done at the expense of staff firefighters personally. And when it comes from your own management it really hurts. (CFA, male, FF).

CFA management have failed to provide support to its staff throughout the EBA negotiations. They have not attempted once to correct false information put out in the media about staff firefighters. (CFA, male, FF)

Being constantly referred to as a union thug or greedy dog in the media just because we are trying to negotiate a new EBA has been awful. Its been very disappointing that not once has the MFB leadership team come out and publicly supported fire fighters and bothered standing up for us. Instead they seem to just be happy letting the media, Herald Sun and certain political parties continue to spread lies about us. It's been a very tough and disappointing few years. (MFB, male, FF)

I am disgusted by snr managements handling of the EB negotiations, especially by dragging it into the public arena and failing to defend their employees against the lies reported by the media. (MFB, male, FF)

I have noticed a distinct lack of guidance and support from higher management ie CO, DCO ACO etc. I have been unfairly described as militant, anti-volunteer and greedy within my community with a resultant negative impact on my reputation. (CFA, male, FF).

The Herald-Sun newspapers 'hands off the CFA' campaign not only increased the risks firefighters faced when responding to emergencies because of the level of hatred among some members of the public, but for people who are motivated by a desire to serve and protect the public, blackening their reputation in this way was deeply emotionally undermining.

The Herald Sun campaign which gave out the stickers "hands off the CFA" has had a detrimental personal effect on me. When I see a vehicle with that sticker on it I feel tense and feel under threat. As there have been recent verbal attacks on union members by volunteers and those who read the Herald Sun and believe what they are reading. (MFB, male, FF)

Recent attack campaign has made us go from the most trusted profession in the community to the most hated. (CFA, male, FF)

Personally I have for the first time been to a psychologist to help deal with the publics disapproval and what feels like hate towards us. I am truly afraid when I have to go out in public in my work uniform for formal fire brigade duties. (CFA, male, FF)

In 28 years of service, I have never felt uncomfortable about my personal safety when telling people what I do for a career but now, I do. I have never felt so disgusted in mainstream media and my own executive staffs handling (and malicious manipulation) of how my colleagues and I have been portrayed to the general public. The political interference has done nothing but make my hatred of politicians, grow beyond what I thought possible. I believe that the damage done between management and my colleagues and myself is irreparable. (MFB, male, FF)

The negative effect of the media campaign against fire fighters never escapes us. Its not just at work, but also socialising with family and friends. Everyone now has an opinion, and the opinion of others is mainly one sided due to what they are hearing on the radio/reading in the papers. (MFB, female, FF)

I feel the media attention and election campaign against career firefighter and UFU members have had an astounding effect on morale. I personally was unsure what members of the public thought of me, my crew and the profession I chose. At times I was questioned by the public and given negative feedback about the industrial action that was undertaken. Other firefighters from my shift have been given grief my members in the public and told "Get a real job!" Especially during election time, I felt we weren't perceived by the public in the highest regard, it made coming to work a little less enjoyable. (CFA, male, FF)

The media coverage of the EB particularly the last 6 months has left me feeling unsafe in my workplace. The consistent lies published and reported have been taken as fact by the general public and we are quite often verbally attacked whilst attending operational incidents. I have observed first hand the stress of my fellow workers. (CFA, male, FF)

Firefighters often tussle with paramedics for the most respected occupation in the country yet CFA with the Liberal party and the VFBV and volunteers where handed a free reign to attack and demonise professional firefighters and their families and the distress that people have suffered is unforgivable. (CFA, male, FF)

Firefighters have been insulted and harassed in the public, media and on social media. Very stressful and I am attending counselling because of this! (MFB, male, FF)

I am drained and saddened by the vitriol continually published against us. I want this to end. I do not trust or respect our management. (MFB, male, FF)

2.4 Impact of industrial campaigns over enterprise bargaining negotiations on morale

The impact on morale of the industrial campaigns surrounding Enterprise Bargaining negotiations is reported in Table 13. We see strong support for the proposition that morale has been negatively affected by these campaigns in the opinion of 87.9% of respondents overall. Females are less strongly in agreement with proportionally more females (23.4%) than males (11.2%) being 'mostly' in agreement, and more females (12.8%) than males (4.1%) neutral. Fewer non-operational staff (73.2%) agree than firefighters (88.5%), and slightly more MFB staff (89.5%) agree than CFA staff (85.5%).

Table 13 Opinion: Impact of industrial campaigns over enterprise bargaining negotiations on morale – by service, gender and role

The industrial campaigns surrounding our Enterprise Bargaining negotiations have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Strongly agree	76.0	59.6	76.8	51.2	50.0	50.0	77.2	63.6	77.7
	Mostly agree	11.9	23.4	11.2	22.0	28.6	19.2	11.4	21.2	11.0
	No opinion / neutral	4.5	12.8	4.1	14.6	21.4	11.5	4.0	9.1	3.8
	Mostly disagree	2.4	0.0	2.5	2.4	0.0	3.8	2.4	0.0	2.5
	Strongly disagree	5.3	4.3	5.4	9.8	0.0	15.4	5.1	6.1	5.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	73.7	61.1	74.3	57.7	66.7	55.0	74.9	58.3	75.4
	Mostly agree	11.8	22.2	11.3	15.4	16.7	15.0	11.6	25.0	11.1
	No opinion / neutral	5.9	11.1	5.6	11.5	16.7	10.0	5.5	8.3	5.4
	Mostly disagree	2.7	0.0	2.8	3.8	0.0	5.0	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Strongly disagree	5.9	5.6	5.9	11.5	0.0	15.0	5.5	8.3	5.4
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	77.6	58.6	78.6	40.0	37.5	33.3	78.8	66.7	79.2
	Mostly agree	11.9	24.1	11.2	33.3	37.5	33.3	11.2	19.0	10.9
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	13.8	2.9	20.0	25.0	16.7	3.0	9.5	2.7
	Mostly disagree	2.1	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.3
	Strongly disagree	4.9	3.4	5.0	6.7	0.0	16.7	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 14 Opinion: Impact of industrial campaigns over enterprise bargaining negotiations on morale – by length of service

The industrial campaigns surrounding our Enterprise Bargaining negotiations have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Strongly agree	76.0	66.9	78.4	69.9	77.3	72.7	75.0	85.9	75.2	88.4
	Mostly agree	11.9	18.1	10.8	15.1	13.6	10.4	10.0	6.7	11.0	2.3
	No opinion / neutral	4.5	7.5	4.3	5.4	6.4	2.6	15.0	1.5	2.8	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.4	3.8	1.4	1.1	0.0	3.9	0.0	1.5	5.5	2.3
	Strongly disagree	5.3	3.8	5.0	8.6	2.7	10.4	0.0	4.4	5.5	7.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	73.7	74.5	73.5	53.5	78.7	73.9	76.5	91.7	68.2	87.5
	Mostly agree	11.8	8.8	14.3	23.3	14.8	6.5	5.9	4.2	18.2	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	5.9	8.8	2.0	9.3	6.6	2.2	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.7	2.9	2.0	2.3	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	13.6	0.0
	Strongly disagree	5.9	4.9	8.2	11.6	0.0	13.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	77.6	53.4	81.1	84.0	75.5	71.0	66.7	84.7	77.0	88.6
	Mostly agree	11.9	34.5	8.9	8.0	12.2	16.1	33.3	7.2	9.2	2.9
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	5.2	5.6	2.0	6.1	3.2	0.0	1.8	3.4	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.1	5.2	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	1.8	3.4	2.9
	Strongly disagree	4.9	1.7	3.3	6.0	6.1	6.5	0.0	4.5	6.9	5.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 15 **Opinion: Impact of industrial campaigns over enterprise bargaining negotiations on morale – by age**

The industrial campaigns surrounding our Enterprise Bargaining negotiations have had a profoundly damaging effect on morale		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Strongly agree	76.0	66.9	78.4	69.9	77.3	72.7	75.0	85.9	75.2	88.4
	Mostly agree	11.9	18.1	10.8	15.1	13.6	10.4	10.0	6.7	11.0	2.3
	No opinion / neutral	4.5	7.5	4.3	5.4	6.4	2.6	15.0	1.5	2.8	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.4	3.8	1.4	1.1	0.0	3.9	0.0	1.5	5.5	2.3
	Strongly disagree	5.3	3.8	5.0	8.6	2.7	10.4	0.0	4.4	5.5	7.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	73.7	74.5	73.5	53.5	78.7	73.9	76.5	91.7	68.2	87.5
	Mostly agree	11.8	8.8	14.3	23.3	14.8	6.5	5.9	4.2	18.2	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	5.9	8.8	2.0	9.3	6.6	2.2	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.7	2.9	2.0	2.3	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	13.6	0.0
	Strongly disagree	5.9	4.9	8.2	11.6	0.0	13.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	77.6	53.4	81.1	84.0	75.5	71.0	66.7	84.7	77.0	88.6
	Mostly agree	11.9	34.5	8.9	8.0	12.2	16.1	33.3	7.2	9.2	2.9
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	5.2	5.6	2.0	6.1	3.2	0.0	1.8	3.4	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.1	5.2	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	1.8	3.4	2.9
	Strongly disagree	4.9	1.7	3.3	6.0	6.1	6.5	0.0	4.5	6.9	5.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

In Table 14 we see that while the degree of support for the proposition is fairly consistent across length of service cohorts, despite agreement being slightly strongest among staff with a length of service more than 35 years, and weakest in the 0 – 3 year category. It may be that longer serving staff have memory of a period when the fire services operated without the industrial conflict that has plagued it in recent times, and thus have a basis for comparison, whereas conflict is all the younger staff have known.

Table 15 shows no discernible trend across age cohorts.

2.5 Comments on factors impacting on morale

I have endured a number of EBA negotiations in my 16 years as a career firefighter. With each campaign the negativity and vitriol toward career firefighters takes a little away from the morale of firefighters. We recover to a degree but never back to pre-campaign status. It chips away at any good will between the employer and employee. For me the most hurtful thing is that most career firefighters want nothing more than to improve service, professionalism and safety, while maintaining a reasonable living and for that we are described as greedy, selfish thugs. (CFA, male, FF).

Subjecting career firefighters to an orchestrated campaign of public vilification each time the terms and conditions of their work are renegotiated is regarded by many survey respondents to constitute bullying and harassment. The negative impact of this process is clearly regarded as significant by those experiencing it:

If I could answer more strongly than 'strongly agree' I would. The morale is without doubt the lowest I have ever seen in 15 yrs in the MFB. It has become an absolutely horrible place to work, only compensated by the operational staff with which I work alongside, and the positive work we do for the community. I personally cannot see how the current executive management team will ever be able to work with its operational staff. I for one will never forgive them for what they HAVE done with regards to our EBA, and even more so what they HAVEN'T done in terms of defending us within the public domain against repeated

and ongoing attacks by the media. My opinion is that it is an untenable relationship. it saddens me to have joined a job that I love so much, yet have such disregard for the current management and their tactics. If it was to continue, for my and my families sake, I would consider other employment. (MFB, male, FF)

It has effected staff so badly some are considering leaving. (MFB, male, FF)

Management are aware and proactive in destroying our morale, I've had friends commit suicide and this negative environment had been a contributing factor towards their actions. Suicide rates and marriage breakdowns have increased in the MFB because of all the added stress. (MFB, male, FF)

Lack of upper management support has had the most profound effect in damaging morale among firefighters. (MFB, male, FF)

Worst morale I have seen in over 30 years of fire service involvement. (Male CFA FF)

Throughout my entire employment with CFA we have been involved in one dispute or another, be it attacks from state governments, attacks from my employer or attacks from the volunteer association. This has had an extremely damaging impact on morale. (Male CFA FF).

Morale is low amongst firefighters and corporate staff. (Female, CFA, Non-operational)

Career firefighters are at breaking point. (CFA, male, FF).

I love and am proud of the job and service I have given, but I have to say that I hate the fire brigade and have lost all respect for the MFB organisation. (Long-serving MFB, male, FF)

The stress and anxiety the 3.5 years of dispute has caused me is immeasurable. The job has changed for me, completely for the negative. Never in my time have I seen a person in a position of leadership make a statement in a newspaper that they support us or our campaign for better conditions or pay. All senior management has done is try to crucify us for their own personal gain. This is a fire service, not a business and needs to be run as such. (MFB, male, FF).

Non-operational staff are also experiencing negative morale:

As I'm a corporate and technical employee, I don't have as clear a view on operational EBA matters as firefighters have. However there is an adverse effect on the morale of (almost) all employees. (MFB, male, non-operational staff member)

Some speak of how it impacts them personally:

There have been days I haven't felt like going to work as I've felt so weighed down by the negativity going around in the media, social media, etc. (CFA ,Female, FF)

The industrial action and media coverage has affected my personal life relationships as well as low morale within the workplace. (MFB, Male, FF)

Not only morale has been affected, a lot of F/fs including myself are struggling to cope mentally with the ongoing media attacks and lack of any kind of support by the MFB senior management. (MFB, male, FF)

Firefighters sense a lack of respect towards them by the people in leadership roles in the fire services:

Throughout my 8 year career with the CFA a vast majority of it has been spent defending myself and my colleagues against the continuous attacks from senior management against our conditions of employment. CFA has not respected its career firefighters in anyway in the past and I feel that this has had a profound impact on myself and my colleagues, I always wanted to be a career firefighter and saw it as an elite position where I was held in high regard by my employer but the past 8 years has shown the complete opposite of this.

I have heard us (career firefighters) referred to as "the cancer on the authority", the "necessary evil", "over paid cleaners", "hose holders" and "glorified volunteers". (CFA, male, FF)

31 years in the job I have never felt as disrespected as I do now mainly by the executive staff, almost to the point of leaving because of the treatment we receive. (MFB, male, FF)

Several resent the very public and politicized way that all parties to the industrial negotiations, including the UFU, have conducted the struggle:

Since supporting the ALP at the last election firefighting has become too political and we will likely face more negative repercussions from LNP when they are in power. (MFB, male, FF)

Political grandstanding and machinations are destroying the strong public confidence in the Fire brigades built up over generations. (MFB, male, FF)

The recent handling of the EBA disputes has caused morale to fall even further, and it has been due to all sides, including the current government, UFU and CFA management of the issue. In some ways the current behaviour of the UFU is doing more damage and lowering morale even further again when we just want to move past this. The recent MFB termination case is causing issues as many firefighters do not support the UFUs position. (CFA, male, FF)

On the contrary I believe the UFU's handling in the media and ongoing public commentary has been the most damaging to fire service volunteer and employee morale. (CFA, female, non-operational staff member)

I strongly question the UFU's position on safety, there are numerous examples of better and safer equipment that has been made available by CFA and have been banned by the UFU. The UFU must carry responsibility for the politicisation for the current dispute. (CFA, male, FF)

The union needs to give in a little. (MFB, male, FF)

I think the union is just as much to blame for the beat up as other entities. (CFA, male, non-operational fire service staff member)

I think that the UFU is just as guilty as others in causing the problem. (CFA, Male, FF)

I think both union and management need to be more flexible in negotiations. (MFB, male, FF)

The political motivations from all aspects being government, organisational and Union have done no favours to morale amongst career and volunteers and has negatively impacted myself in doing my job. (MFB, male, FF)

The very public nature of the dispute thrust firefighters into the spotlight at social gatherings, forcing them to defend positions, and intransigence, they did not fully understand, prompting several to call for greater rank and file consultation:

The UFU have never consulted any member I know regarding the contents of the EBA or asked us what we want. So we had to defend the newspaper stories not knowing the truth. (CFA, male, FF)

The political football has been a disgrace. The stance by both parties (CFA & UFU) to be unwilling to move from their stance has been terrible and has affected too many. The Union has not consulted the membership and there are far too many bad clauses that should not be included, but to talk against them, will have that individual singled out and ridiculed. (CFA, male, FF)

I would like to see the Union make more effort to be transparent and explain issues more clearly through shop stewards. I would also like to see the Union take responsibility for

their part in our current negative culture. I support the union and believe the majority of blame lies with management, boards and government for the current culture. I do however think that we as firefighters and as a union could have done more to contribute to a better culture and perception of our occupation. (MFB, male, FF)

Others are simply demanding a resolution:

I want to see an end to the lack of management support and an end to this eternal fighting from both sides. Get it sorted out now! (MFB, male, FF).

While the majority of comments generally reflect a position sympathetic to what the Union espouses, some are more forthright about the relevance of the Union and the need to stand with it:

I find it an absolute disgrace that both the MFB and CFA boards and senior management have done all in their power to sabotage and frustrate EBA negotiations with the sole ambition to destroy the close knit union of firefighters. The UFU is the sole stake holder in this dispute that places community and fire fighter safety as a highest priority, whereas corporate managers are only interested in cutting resources to please their political masters to ultimately feather their own nest. **THEY MUST ALL BE SACKED** before the MFB / CFA can move forward. (MFB, male, FF)

Fully support the UFU industrial campaign. (MFB, Male, FF)

Three key things I have learnt during the last 3 years is that the Herald Sun is the work of evil people., Our ELT CANNOT be trusted and the only people who care about my OH and S is UFU and my fellow mates. (MFB, male, FF)

Sometimes we have to play with fire (raise issues over the wasted money [\$21m in legal fees] by others to diminish our EBA, *Fire Service Levy* and Fiskville neglect to all. (CFA, male, FF).

What rankles most for many is the disinformation, the untruths about firefighters and the issues in dispute, that were allowed to circulate in tabloid media without rebuttal by the leaders of the fire services. Their silence was considered collusion and complicity in the vilification process.

The whole process has caused me to feel ill, however I understand the other side of the story to some degree and expect that some compromise needs to take place. It's the dishonestly and politically based campaign which has made me feel quite ill - and still do. (MFB, male, FF)

It has been a very demoralizing and frustrating campaign of lies. (CFA, male, FF)

It is absolutely crushing to be constantly treated like a criminal when you have done nothing wrong. (MFB, male, FF)

At the height of the vilification campaign there was no respite:

It has not only had a negative effect on me, but also my family that is even of greater concern. Management should be ashamed and held accountable for their negative attitude. (CFA, male, FF)

The effect the media, anti-Union campaigns and individuals on social media has had a massive negative impact on morale and workplace satisfaction, not to mention having to explain yourself and defend an honourable job to strangers and your friends/family, which is very stressful. (CFA, male, FF)

The current drawn out EB negotiations have left the service at station level at an all time low. New employees are seeing management and the UFU in constant disagreement during negotiations. Stress on a personal level has never been higher in my 28 year career. There is no escape from the constant arguments both at work and on my days off or while on leave, everywhere I go I am being attacked from friends and the public because I am a professional fire fighter. We are being seen as attacking the volunteers, in the past I was

very proud to say what I did for a job - not anymore thanks to the Politicians and the Negative press The Herald Sun. (MFB, male, FF).

The recent EBA negotiations have been described not only by myself but my colleagues as the worst ever and for the first time I found myself having to defend my role to family and friends. Morale is at an all-time low and something needs to change. (CFA, male, FF).

Once-proud firefighters have ceased to disclose what they do for a living.

This campaign has taken an enormous toll on myself my partner and my colleagues. Sleeplessness and lack of morale are extremely common. Our degradation in the public arena has led me to not divulge my profession to those who enquire in fear of abuse. We are forced to work with the very volunteers who have publicly and privately attacked us and this has a profoundly negative impact on our mental health. (CFA, male, FF)

The CFA and VFBV have made it such that I don't want to be seen in uniform in public and in the country they have made it hard to be a career firefighter in the country. (CFA, male, FF)

I am tired of working for an organisation that hates me because I get paid. I simply want to do my job without the politics and do it to the very best of my ability. I am tired of interfering volunteers who display envy and their parochial deeds that prevent a proper emergency service to the community. At the moment, I am embarrassed to tell people that I work for the CFA. (CFA, male, FF).

Newer recruits have only known a toxic working environment:

Coming into the CFA in the last 2 years the only work environment that I have been exposed to is one of frustration and at times anger. Having worked for another fire service in my previous employment I know how great this job can be when morale is high. For people new to the job the level of morale and lack of leadership shown has been toxic. The dispute has dragged on far too long and has been far too public. We just want a safe workplace and to not have to defend our profession. (CFA, male, FF)

Even though my career within the CFA is new, from what I have seen the EB and all the protesting has had a damaging effect on moral of FF and Officers on station. They are sick and tired of being victimised in the street when they are trying to perform their duties. It pains me to see this as a new FF to the service. (CFA, male, FF)

As I'm not long out of recruits I have not experienced the damaging effect that the EB and media has had but I have certainly heard and seen the effect it has had on senior long servicing firefighters. (MFB, male, FF).

I hope that Daniel Andrews sacks the MFB board, CEO and most of senior management. I hope he then prosecutes those responsible for sending firefighters to Fiskville and compensates those affected without confidentiality agreements having to be signed. I want the names of those responsible available for all to see and I want them held to account. Firefighters are dying and the people responsible for the organisation are killing them. I haven't been in the service long. And with a focus on my recruit training I haven't been exposed to much to the low morale due to the EBA and mass media scare mongering. However I HAVE witnessed the effects on my experienced colleagues. (MFB, male, FF)

None of the comments suggest anything else than that morale is desperately low in the CFA and MFB, although many refer to the strength they have drawn from colleagues.

Day to day is tough at the fire station. My family life has been impacted by the stress I have been placed under from the ongoing dispute. Having graduated into this environment I know nothing else other than this negative workplace. My peers are the best thing about being a firefighter as we help each other through day to day stresses including supporting each other through this ongoing dispute (MFB, male, FF).

The industrial campaign has brought career firefighters from both services closer together. (CFA, male, FF)

Some express concern that more than just morale has been damaged by the campaign waged against them:

The past and current environment concerning the above mentioned issues has effected more than just the firefighters morale. It has damaged the standing and integrity of a once highly regarded group of men and women who chose a career of serving the masses, for some at the expense of a more financially lucrative job. (MFB, male, FF)

In my 28 years as a professional firefighter, I have taken part in many industrial campaigns, I have never seen firefighters so maligned by our own management, our government and the media as we have been in this dispute. These people have done irreparable damage to the image and reputation of Victoria's professional firefighters, I have never felt so disrespected and unappreciated in my life and I will never forgive them for it. (MFB, male, FF)

After over 40 years service, I believe government, senior management and MFB board have damaged the job so much that believe it will NEVER recover to what it was. (MFB, male, FF)

The CFA is stuffed. (CFA, male, FF).

2.5.1 The relationship with volunteers

There are several references by career firefighters to having excellent relationships with volunteer firefighters, many of whom have stood with the career fighters against the actions of the VFBV in recent months. Nevertheless, a recurring issue throughout the survey is the often strained relationship between career and volunteer firefighters within the CFA. Volunteers are cited as significant perpetrators of bullying and other hostile behaviours toward career staff. This is even felt by those in the MFB:

Volunteers have an element of jealousy with regards to staff firefighters. This results in an anti-career mentality where volunteers become insulting, aggressive and bullying. They have no right to have a say in firefighter's employment conditions. The fact that they do results in excessive bullying and undermining staff firefighter's integrity and standing in the community. There is a lot of reform required in the fire service. (MFB, male, FF)

I work with mostly fantastic people. I have had a long time with the organisation and have been consistently let down by the behaviour of some senior people. I have also witnessed extreme cases of hatred of career FF,s by volunteers. (MFB, male, FF)

For CFA career firefighters the problems appear to stem from the different standards volunteers are held to compared with career staff, because of the difficulty of attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteers to mount a sufficient response to major bushfires and other emergencies. The fear of losing volunteers makes CFA authorities reluctant to force them to comply with the same rules of conduct expected of career staff, such as refraining from publicly threatening or abusing career staff and their families. Such threats were reportedly regular occurrences during the negotiation of the EBA and in the lead up to the recent federal election. The inconsistent position on use of CFA badging and equipment for political campaigning is another example.

To be a target of a political campaign is outrageous and to damage our professional careers is unforgivable. To watch volunteers be able to do what they want through this campaign is simply double standards in my opinion as if career staff were to wear CFA uniform or use CFA vehicles for political campaigns we would be disciplined. One standard for all CFA if you want to be fair. (CFA, male, FF).

The people in the head roles need to pull their heads in and worry about what is important for the community instead of themselves. As for bullying - there is not a lot of it in my experience but like any organisation it is there in some degree. I believe on a station level it is dealt with pretty well amongst career staff, but when a volunteer does it..... well its almost like they are untouchable, because we don't want to upset them. (CFA, male, FF)

I believe that Senior Management has double standards when it comes to career firefighters and volunteers. Even when senior management have been made aware of Volunteers deliberately disregarding directives given by the Chief Fire Officer or other senior officers regarding the use of CFA appliances, uniforms and other equipment they do not address these issues or breaches in discipline. If career firefighters were to act in the same manner as the volunteer members and use appliances and equipment as the volunteers have (taking operational appliances off line and using them in political rallies, jeopardising public safety) or verbally abusing career firefighters at polling booths or through social media, then the career firefighters would be severely reprimanded without hesitation.

Senior management chooses to allow and almost condone poor volunteer behaviour and turn a blind eye when these breaches in discipline take place. Therefore, this poor discipline continues and gets worse. Senior management also chooses to allow or even condone the spread of misinformation by media outlets and volunteers regarding the current EBA process. (CFA, male, FF)

Career staff always operate with integrity but it appears volunteers use their status as protection from poor behaviour. (CFA, male, FF)

Others see the behavioural problems and animosities stem from an inflated view volunteers are encouraged to have of their ability which causes conflict when career firefighters are established in their areas.

As a trainer who has trained both vols and career staff the difference is huge, and dangerous. There is no comparison between the work a career ff needs to do to get in or compete on an on-going basis to that of a vol but we are supposed to be equal one fire service it is bordering on lying! (CFA, male, FF)

The organisation breed and support a dangerous culture by pumping people's tyres up in an unrealistic manner i.e. We're all trained to the same level, we're all heroes...etc (CFA, male, FF)

Career firefighters view the political campaign by the VFBV as having fanned the flames of animosity among volunteers to the point of overtly expressing hatred for career staff, which impacted on their private lives and their families.

Career firefighters consistently sacrifice time with family and are regularly put in dangerous and highly traumatic situations. It is incredibly damaging to be constantly and publicly attacked, vilified and bullied by the Herald Sun, the VFBV and the State and Federal Liberal parties, when all the UFU and career firefighters are trying to do is provide a better level of service to the public. It is the public that we owe our duty to and must provide the best level of service possible, regardless of who that service is provided by. The VFBV only care about preventing career firefighters from 'taking over' volunteer response areas at all cost with no regard for the primary purpose of the CFA, which is to protect life and property to the best of our abilities. It's a shame that individual egos and Andrew Ford's political career aspirations have resulted in so many lies and the destruction of what was once a great organisation. (CFA, male, FF)

The damage done to the relationships between volunteers and career firefighters will take years to repair, if at all. The VFBV used the volunteers for political purpose. They spread fear and lies. The CEO of the VFBV is a disgrace and should be removed from office. (CFA, male, FF)

There is improvement required by all parties to lift the career fire-services morale. However, there has been deep damage done to the relationship between career staff and CFA volunteers who believe/support VFBV's position that undermine fire-fighter and community safety. (MFB, male, FF)

The VFBV have actively mislead CFA volunteers for their own agenda and the beliefs of VFBV senior members and district representatives. They have not represented the volunteers to the best of their ability. The misinformation and lies to volunteers have gone unchecked and is a disgrace. People like Andrew Ford and Eric Collier need to be held accountable for the mistrusted, lies and getting good volunteers to support their agenda instead of telling the CFA volunteers the truth.

If I made comments and accusations such as Eric Collier CFA district 08 VFBV representative have made to career staff, these actions would not be tolerated. Yet he has been able and allowed to continue with harassment and bullying of career staff with no action. This is unacceptable and is not an organisation process. State legislation applies here. And to this point to the best of my knowledge people like this get a slap on the wrist, not the full force of zero tolerance in these matters. Someone maybe a senior politician need to take the lies, mistruths and bullying and hold those people populating it and hold them to account for their part and their willing actions in the matter. Removing them from the VFBV and no longer allowing their inclusion with CFA should be the only allowable outcome to set and maintain standards as well as implementing the EEO and bullying policies of the Victorian state government. (CFA, male, FF)

I have been astounded at the lack of support that I've witnessed from CFA management. I have also been dismayed at the actions of the VFBV to deliberately cause a divide between career and volunteers, they have fed lies to their members and caused heartache on both sides. It's been a disgrace that the CFA has allowed itself to be used as a federal election tool for the liberal government. (CFA, male, FF)

The current EBA industrial campaign by the volunteer association and CFA management has driven a wedge between us all and has had an increasing negative effect in my workplace. (CFA, male, FF)

I feel that the current senior management's lack of support has created an irreparable divide between the career firefighters and senior management. I also believe that the political agenda of the liberal party and the Herald Sun newspaper to smear our reputation in the public eye has caused a frictional divide between career firefighters and the public (including the CFA volunteers) that will take years to repair, if ever. (MFB, male, FF)

False information given by influential politicians to uninformed people went unchecked and caused a lot of damage with relationships between volunteers and career FFs and the public. (MFB, male, FF)

This last dispute was hijacked by others whose agendas have had a severely drastic effect on morale & the relationship between volunteers & career firefighters. (CFA, male, FF)

CFA has bullied firefighters via the media and use of the VFBV. CFA needs to review the funding of the VFBV. Because CFA fund the VFBV they are responsible for its action's, or CFA need to fund the career fighters representative body the UFU the same so not to exclude career firefighters. (CFA, male, FF).

The lack of support by the CFA has been one of the major reasons of disappointment and also the local Volunteer members and their behaviour towards staff and their families. (CFA, male, FF).

Such is the depth of the damage in the relationship that some staff call for the separation of volunteer and career firefighters into separate services.

I used to love this organisation. That is no longer the case. I do not want to work with volunteers and in an organisation that does not value staff. (CFA, male, FF).

I still cant believe volunteers are involved. VFBV are a disgrace and we can never work together again. If we were divided then 3/4 of cfa's hr issues would go away. Someone just needs the balls to make that decision. Just like John Howards and the gun laws. (CFA, male, FF).

the level of damage to morale and trust towards volunteers may be terminal to the cfa's current integrated model. (CFA, male, FF).

The constant attack from Right Wing media outlets along with Liberal/National politicians deliberately publicly spreading false and misleading information has been disgusting and led to a public denigration of fire fighters that will be difficult to return from. The UFU and us as fire fighters want to provide the public with the best fire fighting service, well trained and experienced fire fighters and the tools and equipment possible. Every time we try and advance the service and move to modernise, we have VFBV try and drag us back to the eighties. The fire service model is broken and needs to be overhauled. No volunteer should have a say in my pay and conditions!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (CFA, male, FF).

I am no longer supportive of CFA being an Integrated fire service. Based upon lost income alone over the life of my employment my family and I are tens of thousands of dollars worse off due to delays caused by volunteers and their representative body the VFBV, let alone the stress and other issues caused by volunteers to the Career Staff. I implore the UFU, CFA, MFB and Government to work towards removing the Career Staff from the CFA. Leave the volunteers to manage own their own within their own Fire Service. (CFA, male, FF)

2.6 The attitude to gender diversity

2.6.1 Recruitment issues

The principle challenge to increasing the level of female career firefighters is that while recruitment adverts immediately attract an abundance of suitable male applicants, the application period needs to remain open far longer, and more promotional work undertaken to attract an equivalent number of female applicants. On previous occasions, efforts to recruit suitably fit female applicants have included targeted promotional activity through women's sporting organisations, and other creative strategies.

Firefighter applicants are subjected to a rigorous assessment process, focusing on communication skill, analytical ability, mechanical aptitude, temperament, physical strength and fitness. The reason for this rigour is that firefighting crews are highly reliant on each other's competence and physical capacity to protect each other's safety when operating in dangerous environments. Any doubts in the ability of one of their number can seriously undermine the confidence of all to do what has to be done when public lives and property are on the line, greatly increases the stress under which the crew operates, and the possibility of negative post-stress reactions.

A tension thus arises when, after strenuous effort is made to attract female candidates, a significant number fail to meet the assessment requirements. One solution is to provide a pre-assessment orientation and fitness training program well before (eg., six months) the assessment takes place, to provide applicants sufficient time to learn what will be required of them and develop their fitness accordingly. An alternative strategy is to lower the recruitment assessment standards.

It has been suggested that when firefighters raise objections to the strategy of lowering recruitment assessment standards it reflects an inherent opposition they have to increasing the number of female firefighters.

2.6.2 Respect for women firefighters

A series of questions were put to respondents to clarify the predominant view of fire service staff concerning this issue.

It begins with Table 16 which presents responses to the question:

‘To what extent do you agree with the following proposition: current women firefighters are well respected among career firefighters’.

Overall, 91.2% of respondents agreed with the proposition, 5.2% disagreed and 3.6% had no opinion. Overall 78.8% of women agreed compared to 92% of men, with non-operational females by far the least positive cohort as to the degree of respect accorded female firefighters, with 21% strongly agreeing (compared with 51.5% of female firefighters). This divergence among female respondents is most pronounced in the CFA, where 16.7% of non-operational females ‘strongly’ agree with the proposition, compared to 58.3% of female firefighters.

Among career firefighters, 87.9% of female respondents agreed, 9.1% disagreed, while 92.5% of male respondents agreed and 4.3% disagreed. Slightly more CFA female firefighters (91.7%) agreed than CFA male firefighters (91.3%), while fewer MFB Female firefighters (85.7%) agreed than males (93.3%). A larger proportion of males strongly support the proposition than females, in both services and within operational and non-operational cohorts.

A number of possible interpretations may flow from this result:

- Men may accord women firefighters the same respect that they show to their male colleagues, which would vary on an individual basis, so that just as some men command greater respect than others, some women command greater respect than others. A female firefighter who felt they did not command a colleague’s respect to the extent they felt they merited may not be able to resolve if it were due to their gender or some other reason.
- Men may consciously believe that they are respectful of their female counterparts whereas women may be more sensitive or aware of unconscious bias on the part of their male colleagues. For example, women are more likely to notice the incongruity of being addressed as ‘gents’ in group emails.
- Those 4.6% of men that disagree with the proposition may be signifying that they disagree that their fellow male fire fighters show their women colleagues appropriate respect, which is the likely reason why 14.9% of women disagree, or they may be saying that they themselves do not have respect for women fire fighters. The latter is not borne out by the comments made throughout the survey that touch on the issue.
- Male interpretations of the meaning of ‘respect’ may be informed by different cultural norms over time, so that what an older male cohort may consider ‘respectful’ (eg., not expecting a woman to do a man’s work like heavy lifting or facing danger) a younger cohort may consider condescending, patronising and impugning of their professionalism.
- An oversight in the survey design is that we did not ask if male career firefighters are respected among career firefighters, as this may have yielded a similar response.

Table 16 Opinion as to whether women firefighters are respected by career firefighters by service gender and role

Current women firefighters are well respected among career firefighters		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	69.8	42.6	71.3	48.8	21.4	61.5	70.8	51.5	71.6
	Mostly agree	21.4	36.2	20.7	22.0	35.7	15.4	21.4	36.4	20.9
	No opinion / neutral	3.6	6.4	3.5	12.2	14.3	11.5	3.2	3.0	3.2
	Mostly disagree	2.3	10.6	1.7	9.8	21.4	3.8	1.9	6.1	1.6
	Strongly disagree	2.9	4.3	2.9	7.3	7.1	7.7	2.7	3.0	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	67.2	44.4	68.4	50.0	16.7	60.0	68.5	58.3	68.9
	Mostly agree	22.6	33.3	22.0	19.2	33.3	15.0	22.8	33.3	22.5
	No opinion / neutral	3.8	5.6	3.7	11.5	16.7	10.0	3.2	0.0	3.3
	Mostly disagree	3.0	11.1	2.5	7.7	16.7	5.0	2.6	8.3	2.4
	Strongly disagree	3.5	5.6	3.4	11.5	16.7	10.0	2.9	0.0	3.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	71.6	41.4	73.4	46.7	25.0	66.7	72.3	47.6	73.5
	Mostly agree	20.6	37.9	19.7	26.7	37.5	16.7	20.4	38.1	19.7
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	6.9	3.3	13.3	12.5	16.7	3.2	4.8	3.2
	Mostly disagree	1.8	10.3	1.0	13.3	25.0	0.0	1.4	4.8	1.1
	Strongly disagree	2.5	3.4	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.8	2.5
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

The long length of service of the average firefighter, in comparison to employees in other organisations, and the relatively stable set of professional relationships they have in sometimes working with the same shift at the same station for many years, is likely to produce a workplace culture that evolves more slowly than one in which turnover is higher. This suggests that older cultural norms that have possibly receded in less stable working populations could be more apparent among firefighters.

Given that this is an overwhelmingly male population, we might then expect to see some relationship between length of service and perceptions as to how respected women fire fighters are in the eyes of their colleagues. Unfortunately, we cannot draw too strong a conclusion if we do see a trend, since a low level of agreement with the proposition (aligning more closely with the view female firefighter respondents have to the question) might reflect a view that females are not accorded the respect they deserve, or it may indicate that the respondent believes they do not merit respect. Similarly, a high degree of agreement may mean the respondent is unaware of unconscious prejudice they and colleagues show toward women colleagues, and feel women have no cause for complaint, or may indicate their belief that women firefighters have proven themselves equal to men in terms of what is needed to get the job done and have earned widespread respect.

Table 17 reports the degree of agreement with the proposition by length of service, with no clear trend emerging. Agreement with the proposition is highest among those with a length of service between 25-30 years of service (95.6%), yet the lowest level of agreement in the MFB is the preceding cohort (20-25 years, 66.7%), although this is a very small cohort.

The shortest and longest overall length of service cohorts are 93.1% and 93% in agreement with the proposition respectively. Support for the proposition in both organisations is lowest for the cohort with 15–20 years of service (CFA: 84.8%, MFB: 83.9%) which also has the highest level of disagreement in the MFB (12.9%) and second highest in the CFA (10.9%).

Table 17 Opinion as to whether women firefighters are respected by career firefighters by length of service

Current women firefighters are well respected among career firefighters		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Strongly agree	69.8	71.9	76.3	62.4	69.1	70.1	75.0	69.6	67.0	62.8
	Mostly agree	21.4	21.3	18.7	24.7	19.1	14.3	15.0	25.9	22.0	30.2
	No opinion / neutral	3.6	3.8	1.4	4.3	4.5	3.9	5.0	3.0	6.4	0.0
	Mostly disagree	2.3	0.6	0.7	5.4	3.6	5.2	0.0	0.7	2.8	2.3
	Strongly disagree	2.9	2.5	2.9	3.2	3.6	6.5	5.0	0.7	1.8	4.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	67.2	73.5	67.3	51.2	72.1	67.4	76.5	58.3	68.2	37.5
	Mostly agree	22.6	16.7	26.5	37.2	16.4	17.4	17.6	37.5	18.2	50.0
	No opinion / neutral	3.8	5.9	2.0	2.3	4.9	4.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
	Mostly disagree	3.0	1.0	0.0	4.7	4.9	4.3	0.0	4.2	9.1	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.5	2.9	4.1	4.7	1.6	6.5	5.9	0.0	0.0	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	71.6	69.0	81.1	72.0	65.3	74.2	66.7	72.1	66.7	68.6
	Mostly agree	20.6	29.3	14.4	14.0	22.4	9.7	0.0	23.4	23.0	25.7
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	0.0	1.1	6.0	4.1	3.2	33.3	3.6	6.9	0.0
	Mostly disagree	1.8	0.0	1.1	6.0	2.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.9
	Strongly disagree	2.5	1.7	2.2	2.0	6.1	6.5	0.0	0.9	2.3	2.9
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 18 reports responses by age category, indicating a progressive fall in strong agreement for the proposition with an increase in age in relation to CFA staff, but little age effect discernible among age cohorts of MFB staff, save for the very oldest cohort which is the least supportive to a moderate extent.

We draw some basic insights from this data. Firstly, given that 91.7% of CFA female firefighters believe they are respected and 85.7% of MFB female firefighters believe they are respected by their peers, who are over 95% male, these cannot be considered overtly anti-woman or misogynist cultures. The very strong support for the proposition by male respondents suggests at the very least that they believe women fire fighters are due such respect.

Table 18 Opinion as to whether women firefighters are respected by career firefighters by age category

Current women firefighters are well respected among career firefighters		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	69.8	77.8	81.7	71.9	69.6	71.4	73.1	62.9	67.2	58.1
	Mostly agree	21.4	11.1	15.9	19.5	20.3	18.5	20.4	26.6	22.1	34.9
	No opinion / neutral	3.6	11.1	0.0	3.1	3.6	4.2	1.1	4.9	5.3	4.7
	Mostly disagree	2.3	0.0	1.2	1.6	3.6	1.7	1.1	3.5	3.1	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.9	0.0	1.2	3.9	2.9	4.2	4.3	2.1	2.3	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	67.2	83.3	86.5	67.7	66.7	67.2	68.2	51.4	53.3	53.8
	Mostly agree	22.6	0.0	11.5	21.0	23.6	19.0	27.3	31.4	30.0	38.5
	No opinion / neutral	3.8	16.7	0.0	3.2	5.6	5.2	0.0	5.7	3.3	7.7
	Mostly disagree	3.0	0.0	1.9	3.2	1.4	1.7	0.0	11.4	6.7	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.5	0.0	0.0	4.8	2.8	6.9	4.5	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	71.6	66.7	73.3	75.8	72.7	75.4	77.6	66.7	71.3	60.0
	Mostly agree	20.6	33.3	23.3	18.2	16.7	18.0	14.3	25.0	19.8	33.3
	No opinion / neutral	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.5	3.3	2.0	4.6	5.9	3.3
	Mostly disagree	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	1.6	2.0	0.9	2.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	3.3	3.0	3.0	1.6	4.1	2.8	1.0	3.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Secondly, the softer degree of support for the proposition by women firefighters as compared to the strong support for it by their male counterparts, suggests that men may consciously believe their women colleagues to be valuable members of their teams but not appreciate challenges women experience because of their gender. Issues such as a clear supportive policy on pregnancy, or acknowledgment that males are not the only people receiving their communications, are typical examples.

Thirdly, the 8.3% of CFA women firefighters, and 9.5% of those in the MFB who disagreed with the proposition may have had significant personal negative experiences that are not common among women firefighters, or they may be more mindful of / affected by experiences other women firefighters also have, but consider less offensive.

Fourthly, the sharp distinction in how female non-operational staff and female career firefighters view the standing of the latter may reflect differences in the prevailing cultures and narratives of the administrative centres and fire stations from which they operate.

2.6.3 The desirability of gender diversity as an objective

The rationale for requesting the VEOHRC to undertake its present inquiry placed strong emphasis on the low level of female representation in the two main fire services in Victoria, a relatively common feature of fire services around the world. It was a key issue that then Emergency Services Minister drew from the findings of the 2015 Fire Services Review, although it could hardly be considered a revelation given that the gender composition of the workforce had been a feature of MFB and CFA annual reports for over a decade.

There was an implication carried in media coverage of the issue that the low level of female representation was reflective of a misogynist culture that bullied women, a suggestion that provoked a sharp denunciation from women firefighters across the state in defence of their male colleagues.

Union concerns over modifications to recruitment practices aimed at increasing the success rate of female applicants were disparaged in the media as consistent with dominant male hostility toward female firefighters. The Union argued for the importance of maintaining recruitment standards so that firefighters could rely on each other's ability in dangerous situations.

To explore how fire services personnel viewed these issues the survey included a series of questions that sought to separate the issue of maintaining recruitment standards from the issue of achieving a greater gender balance in the fire services. It began with question 37:

As a fire service employee, to what extent do you agree with these statements:
...If it can be attained without compromising rigorous recruitment standards, a greater male / female balance will be a positive step.

Table 19 presents the results by service, role and gender. Overall, 76.9% of respondents agreed with the proposition, 15.1% disagreed and 8.1% were neutral. Significantly, slightly more male respondents (77.2%) agreed with the proposition than females (72.3%). 72.7% of female firefighters agreed with the proposition compared with 77.3% of male firefighters. Women firefighters were slightly more likely to be neutral than men on the subject (18.2% vs 14.6%), and to disagree (9.1%) more than their male counterparts (8.1%).

MFB respondents (79.6%) were slightly more supportive of the proposition than CFA respondents (73.1%), less inclined to be neutral (13.4% vs 17.5%) and less inclined to disagree (7% vs 9.4%). A larger proportion of MFB male firefighters agreed with the proposition than did their female counterparts (80% compared to 71.4%), whereas CFA female firefighters (75% were more supportive of the proposition than males (73.4%).

CFA male firefighters (17.4%) were more likely to be neutral on the subject than CFA females (8.3%), while 23.8% of MFB female firefighters were neutral on the subject compared with 12.6% of males. More CFA female firefighters disagreed with the proposition than did males (16.7% vs 9.3%) though a larger proportion of MFB firefighter males (7.3%) disagreed compared to females (4.8%).

Overall, 73.2% of non-operational staff agreed with the proposition, comprising 69.2% of CFA non-operational staff and 80% of those from the MFB. While 70% (CFA) and 83.3% (MFB) of non-operational males agreed, 20% (CFA) and 16.7% (MFB) were neutral and 10% of non-operational MFB males disagreed compared to none in the CFA doing so.

In addition to the overall support for the proposition, these results appear to undermine the view that reluctance for prioritising gender diversity is due to misogyny or sexist attitudes, since female firefighter respondents appear marginally less supportive of the idea than the males.

One explanation for this is that many firefighters dislike the idea of a quota or target for female diversity because it conflicts with the principle of recruiting whoever is most capable of doing the job. Firefighters rely heavily on each other's ability to perform their physically and emotionally demanding roles under pressure. They contend that a person's gender is largely irrelevant to their ability to do the job, and that their ability alone should determine their selection.

Table 19 Opinion as to the desirability of a greater male / female balance if recruitment standards are not compromised, by service, gender and role

If it can be attained without compromising rigorous recruitment standards, a greater male / female balance will be a positive step		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	55.5	48.9	55.9	46.3	50.0	42.3	56.0	48.5	56.3
	Mostly agree	21.3	23.4	21.3	26.8	21.4	30.8	21.1	24.2	21.0
	No opinion / neutral	15.1	21.3	14.7	22.0	28.6	19.2	14.8	18.2	14.6
	Mostly disagree	4.1	4.3	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	6.1	4.2
	Strongly disagree	4.0	2.1	4.1	4.9	0.0	7.7	3.9	3.0	4.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	49.2	50.0	49.2	42.3	50.0	40.0	49.7	50.0	49.7
	Mostly agree	23.9	22.2	24.0	26.9	16.7	30.0	23.7	25.0	23.7
	No opinion / neutral	17.5	16.7	17.5	23.1	33.3	20.0	17.1	8.3	17.4
	Mostly disagree	4.0	5.6	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	8.3	4.2
	Strongly disagree	5.4	5.6	5.4	7.7	0.0	10.0	5.2	8.3	5.1
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	60.1	48.3	60.8	53.3	50.0	50.0	60.3	47.6	60.9
	Mostly agree	19.5	24.1	19.3	26.7	25.0	33.3	19.2	23.8	19.1
	No opinion / neutral	13.4	24.1	12.7	20.0	25.0	16.7	13.2	23.8	12.6
	Mostly disagree	4.1	3.4	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.8	4.2
	Strongly disagree	2.9	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.2
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Length of service (Table 20) appears not to significantly influence overall support for the proposition. The longest serving cohort (35 years +) is in most agreement with the proposition (81.4%, compared to 76.9% across all cohorts), least neutral (4.7% compared to 15.1% across all cohorts), despite having the highest proportion who disagreed (14% compared to 8% across all cohorts).

With the exception of the youngest age category (a very small cohort), agreement with the proposition is around 75% or higher in each age cohort overall (Table 21). CFA respondents tend to disagree slightly more with age (except for the oldest age group), as do MFB staff.

Table 20 Opinion as to the desirability of a greater male / female balance if recruitment standards are not compromised, by length of service

If it can be attained without compromising rigorous recruitment standards, a greater male / female balance will be a positive step		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Strongly agree	55.5	42.5	62.6	50.5	65.5	55.8	60.0	53.3	57.8	65.1
	Mostly agree	21.3	33.8	14.4	15.1	15.5	23.4	15.0	27.4	17.4	16.3
	No opinion / neutral	15.1	15.6	19.4	21.5	13.6	11.7	20.0	11.1	15.6	4.7
	Mostly disagree	4.1	6.3	0.7	4.3	2.7	1.3	0.0	5.2	4.6	11.6
	Strongly disagree	4.0	1.9	2.9	8.6	2.7	7.8	5.0	3.0	4.6	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	49.2	38.2	42.9	37.2	63.9	56.5	64.7	54.2	68.2	37.5
	Mostly agree	23.9	33.3	22.4	20.9	14.8	21.7	17.6	33.3	9.1	37.5
	No opinion / neutral	17.5	19.6	28.6	23.3	18.0	10.9	11.8	4.2	9.1	0.0
	Mostly disagree	4.0	6.9	2.0	4.7	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.2	9.1	12.5
	Strongly disagree	5.4	2.0	4.1	14.0	1.6	10.9	5.9	4.2	4.5	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	60.1	50.0	73.3	62.0	67.3	54.8	33.3	53.2	55.2	71.4
	Mostly agree	19.5	34.5	10.0	10.0	16.3	25.8	0.0	26.1	19.5	11.4
	No opinion / neutral	13.4	8.6	14.4	20.0	8.2	12.9	66.7	12.6	17.2	5.7
	Mostly disagree	4.1	5.2	0.0	4.0	4.1	3.2	0.0	5.4	3.4	11.4
	Strongly disagree	2.9	1.7	2.2	4.0	4.1	3.2	0.0	2.7	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 21 Opinion as to the desirability of a greater male / female balance if recruitment standards are not compromised, by age category

If it can be attained without compromising rigorous recruitment standards, a greater male / female balance will be a positive step		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	55.5	22.2	52.4	50.8	61.6	57.1	55.9	54.5	55.0	62.8
	Mostly agree	21.3	22.2	26.8	23.4	15.2	21.0	19.4	22.4	22.9	20.9
	No opinion / neutral	15.1	55.6	15.9	14.8	17.4	14.3	18.3	13.3	12.2	9.3
	Mostly disagree	4.1	0.0	3.7	5.5	2.9	2.5	2.2	4.2	6.1	7.0
	Strongly disagree	4.0	0.0	1.2	5.5	2.9	5.0	4.3	5.6	3.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	49.2	0.0	50.0	40.3	54.2	50.0	59.1	40.0	60.0	46.2
	Mostly agree	23.9	33.3	28.8	27.4	15.3	25.9	18.2	34.3	13.3	38.5
	No opinion / neutral	17.5	66.7	15.4	16.1	23.6	19.0	11.4	17.1	6.7	15.4
	Mostly disagree	4.0	0.0	5.8	6.5	2.8	1.7	2.3	2.9	10.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	5.4	0.0	0.0	9.7	4.2	3.4	9.1	5.7	10.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	60.1	66.7	56.7	60.6	69.7	63.9	53.1	59.3	53.5	70.0
	Mostly agree	19.5	0.0	23.3	19.7	15.2	16.4	20.4	18.5	25.7	13.3
	No opinion / neutral	13.4	33.3	16.7	13.6	10.6	9.8	24.5	12.0	13.9	6.7
	Mostly disagree	4.1	0.0	0.0	4.5	3.0	3.3	2.0	4.6	5.0	10.0
	Strongly disagree	2.9	0.0	3.3	1.5	1.5	6.6	0.0	5.6	2.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

2.6.4 Maintaining recruitment standards

The next proposition put to survey respondents to determine the extent of their agreement was:

‘There should be no compromising of recruitment standards’.

Table 22 shows that respondents overall displayed extremely strong support for this proposition (95%) with 4% disagreeing and 1% neutral. Agreement is slightly stronger in the MFB (95.7%) than the CFA (94.1%), with 3.1% disagreeing in the MFB and 5.1% disagreeing in the CFA. CFA Non-operational staff were in full agreement, as were MFB non-operational females, whereas 1 in 5 non-operational MFB males disagreed. Among career firefighters, slightly fewer women agreed with the proposition (90%) than men (95.7%), a difference slightly more pronounced in the CFA than the MFB, and slightly more disagreed (7.5% compared with 3.3%).

Table 22 Opinion as to the importance of not compromising recruitment standards, by service, gender and role

There should be no compromising of recruitment standards		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	90.9	80.9	91.4	51.2	50.0	50.0	92.8	93.9	92.7
	Mostly agree	4.2	10.6	3.8	22.0	21.4	23.1	3.3	6.1	3.2
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	2.1	1.0	9.8	7.1	11.5	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Mostly disagree	0.6	4.3	0.4	7.3	14.3	3.8	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Strongly disagree	3.4	2.1	3.5	9.8	7.1	11.5	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	88.4	66.7	89.5	46.2	33.3	50.0	91.6	83.3	91.9
	Mostly agree	5.6	22.2	4.8	26.9	33.3	25.0	4.0	16.7	3.6
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	0.0	0.8	3.8	0.0	5.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Mostly disagree	0.5	5.6	0.3	7.7	16.7	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.6	5.6	4.5	15.4	16.7	15.0	3.8	0.0	3.9
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	92.6	89.7	92.7	60.0	62.5	50.0	93.6	100.0	93.3
	Mostly agree	3.1	3.4	3.1	13.3	12.5	16.7	2.8	0.0	2.9
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	3.4	1.0	20.0	12.5	33.3	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Mostly disagree	0.6	3.4	0.4	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Agreement with the proposition remained close to or above 90% for all length of service cohorts overall (Table 23), with the exception of the 20-25 years service cohort. This is the smallest length of service cohort (0.6%) in the MFB, in which 66.7% were agreed 33.3% were neutral, whereby the same cohort in the CFA were also the least 'strongly' supportive, although 94% still agreed with the proposition. The softer support in the same cohort for both services may be coincidence or possibly indicative of common issues they had with recruitment selection practices at the time they were recruited.

Table 24 reports that agreement with the proposition is consistently strong across all age cohorts in both services.

Table 23 Opinion on the importance of not compromising recruitment standards, by length of service

There should be no compromising of recruitment standards		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Strongly agree	90.9	93.1	92.1	88.2	90.0	87.0	70.0	94.1	90.8	93.0
	Mostly agree	4.2	2.5	4.3	3.2	5.5	2.6	20.0	4.4	3.7	4.7
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.9	2.6	5.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.6	0.0	0.7	1.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.4	3.1	2.2	6.5	1.8	7.8	5.0	0.7	4.6	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	88.4	93.1	87.8	83.7	90.2	84.8	70.6	91.7	90.9	87.5
	Mostly agree	5.6	2.0	6.1	7.0	8.2	4.3	23.5	8.3	0.0	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.6	3.9	4.1	9.3	0.0	8.7	5.9	0.0	4.5	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	92.6	93.1	94.4	92.0	89.8	90.3	66.7	94.6	90.8	94.3
	Mostly agree	3.1	3.4	3.3	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	4.6	5.7
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	1.7	0.0	2.0	2.0	3.2	33.3	0.9	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.6	0.0	1.1	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	1.7	1.1	4.0	4.1	6.5	0.0	0.9	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 24 Opinion on the importance of not compromising recruitment standards by age group.

There should be no compromising of recruitment standards		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	90.9	77.8	96.3	93.8	89.9	91.6	91.4	88.8	87.8	90.7
	Mostly agree	4.2	11.1	1.2	2.3	3.6	3.4	3.2	6.3	6.1	7.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	2.3
	Mostly disagree	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.4	0.0	2.4	3.1	2.9	4.2	4.3	2.8	5.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	88.4	83.3	96.2	90.3	87.5	89.7	93.2	80.0	80.0	76.9
	Mostly agree	5.6	0.0	1.9	3.2	5.6	5.2	2.3	14.3	6.7	23.1
	No opinion / neutral	0.8	16.7	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.6	0.0	1.9	6.5	2.8	5.2	4.5	2.9	13.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	92.6	66.7	96.7	97.0	92.4	93.4	89.8	91.7	90.1	96.7
	Mostly agree	3.1	33.3	0.0	1.5	1.5	1.6	4.1	3.7	5.9	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.6	2.0	0.9	1.0	3.3
	Mostly disagree	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.0	3.3	4.1	2.8	3.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

2.6.5 Prioritisation of public and firefighter safety

To further clarify the position of fire service staff, we tested the possibility that the danger associated with their work makes the protection of their own health and safety, and their effectiveness in saving other people's lives and property their first priority. We tested the extent that they agreed with the proposition:

Career firefighters prioritise public safety and firefighter safety above other issues.

Table 25 reports responses by service gender and role. Overall, 94.5% of respondents agreed, 1.4% were neutral and 4.2% disagreed. Females (93.6%) and males (94.5%) agreed fairly equally, with women firefighters (97% agreed, 3% neutral) and male firefighters (95.2% agreed and 1% neutral) only marginally different. Males were more frequently 'strongly' in agreement while women were 'mostly' in agreement more often than men.

Table 25 Opinion on proposition that career firefighters prioritise public and personal safety, by service, gender and role

Career firefighters prioritise public safety and firefighter safety above other issues		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-Operational females	Non-Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly agree	87.0	70.2	88.0	51.2	42.9	53.8	88.8	81.8	89.1
	Mostly agree	7.4	23.4	6.5	26.8	42.9	19.2	6.5	15.2	6.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.4	4.3	1.2	7.3	7.1	7.7	1.1	3.0	1.0
	Mostly disagree	0.8	0.0	0.8	4.9	0.0	7.7	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Strongly disagree	3.4	2.1	3.5	9.8	7.1	11.5	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Strongly agree	83.9	55.6	85.3	46.2	33.3	50.0	86.7	66.7	87.4
	Mostly agree	7.8	33.3	6.5	26.9	50.0	20.0	6.4	25.0	5.7
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	5.6	1.7	3.8	0.0	5.0	1.7	8.3	1.5
	Mostly disagree	1.9	0.0	2.0	7.7	0.0	10.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
	Strongly disagree	4.6	5.6	4.5	15.4	16.7	15.0	3.8	0.0	3.9
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	4.8	95.2	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Strongly agree	89.3	79.3	90.0	60.0	50.0	66.7	90.2	90.5	90.3
	Mostly agree	7.2	17.2	6.4	26.7	37.5	16.7	6.6	9.5	6.3
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	3.4	0.8	13.3	12.5	16.7	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Mostly disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

Table 26 reports the response by length of service, which shows strong consistency of agreement (allowing for variations in strength) across MFB cohorts, with the CFA reflecting some softening of agreement in the longest service cohort.

Table 26 Opinion on proposition that career firefighters prioritise public and personal safety, by length of service

Career firefighters prioritise public safety and firefighter safety above other issues		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Strongly agree	87.0	91.9	92.1	83.9	84.5	77.9	70.0	87.4	85.3	93.0
	Mostly agree	7.4	5.0	4.3	7.5	10.0	11.7	20.0	8.1	8.3	2.3
	No opinion / neutral	1.4	0.0	0.7	3.2	0.0	2.6	5.0	3.0	0.9	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.8	0.0	1.4	1.1	0.9	0.0	5.0	0.7	0.0	2.3
	Strongly disagree	3.4	3.1	1.4	4.3	4.5	7.8	0.0	0.7	5.5	2.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.1	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.2	12.3	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	83.9	91.2	87.8	76.7	86.9	78.3	70.6	75.0	81.8	75.0
	Mostly agree	7.8	4.9	6.1	11.6	6.6	8.7	17.6	16.7	4.5	0.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	4.3	5.9	4.2	4.5	0.0
	Mostly disagree	1.9	0.0	4.1	2.3	1.6	0.0	5.9	4.2	0.0	12.5
	Strongly disagree	4.6	3.9	2.0	4.7	4.9	8.7	0.0	0.0	9.1	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	27.4	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Strongly agree	89.3	93.1	94.4	90.0	81.6	77.4	66.7	90.1	86.2	97.1
	Mostly agree	7.2	5.2	3.3	4.0	14.3	16.1	33.3	6.3	9.2	2.9
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	0.0	1.1	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	1.7	1.1	4.0	4.1	6.5	0.0	0.9	4.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

Table 27 reports a high rate of agreement with the proposition across all age cohorts.

Table 27 Opinion on proposition that career firefighters prioritise public and personal safety, by age group

Career firefighters prioritise public safety and firefighter safety above other issues		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Strongly agree	87.0	100.0	95.1	91.4	85.5	88.2	88.2	81.8	82.4	86.0
	Mostly agree	7.4	0.0	2.4	6.3	8.0	5.0	7.5	10.5	9.9	9.3
	No opinion / neutral	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	1.7	0.0	2.8	0.8	4.7
	Mostly disagree	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.7	0.0	0.7	1.5	0.0
	Strongly disagree	3.4	0.0	2.4	2.3	2.9	3.4	4.3	4.2	5.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.4	15.6	13.4	10.5	16.1	14.8	4.9
CFA	Strongly agree	83.9	100.0	96.2	88.7	84.7	87.9	86.4	62.9	63.3	76.9
	Mostly agree	7.8	0.0	1.9	6.5	6.9	3.4	9.1	20.0	16.7	7.7
	No opinion / neutral	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	1.7	0.0	5.7	0.0	15.4
	Mostly disagree	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	3.4	0.0	2.9	6.7	0.0
	Strongly disagree	4.6	0.0	1.9	4.8	2.8	3.4	4.5	8.6	13.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.0	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.4	15.6	11.8	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Strongly agree	89.3	100.0	93.3	93.9	86.4	88.5	89.8	88.0	88.1	90.0
	Mostly agree	7.2	0.0	3.3	6.1	9.1	6.6	6.1	7.4	7.9	10.0
	No opinion / neutral	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.6	0.0	1.9	1.0	0.0
	Mostly disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly disagree	2.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.0	3.3	4.1	2.8	3.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.0	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

2.6.6 Comments in relation to enhanced gender diversity

On the questions raised in the survey regarding the general attitude toward women firefighters and the question of modifying recruitment assessment processes to enable more female applicants to pass, comments were fairly consistently of the view that the pursuit of a greater gender balance should not be at the expense of ensuring that new recruits are capable of doing the job.

It would be good to see more diversity in the fire services AS LONG AS THE STANDARDS OF ENTRY ARE HELD TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL POSSIBLE. At the end of the day our job depends on each recruit being fit and able mentally and physically for the challenges of the job. Firefighting is unlike any other industry and the organisation needs to recognise this. (Male, CFA).

A female firefighter makes the same point:

I don't believe a gender balance should be a priority, a firefighter is a firefighter, there is no gender associated with the term. If more women want to join that's great but they need to pass the same tests as the rest of us. We rely on each other and need the reassurance the person next to you is capable of having your back if you need it. (Female, MFB, FF)

Her point is echoed by this MFB male firefighter:

In relation to the number of females in our job. I had a high number of recruit female firefighters on my course and I have worked with many females in different stations in my career as a firefighter.

They have been the equal to any male I have worked with!

Our job is a tough, dangerous and challenging one. We must ensure that our recruiting standards don't not change just to meet a set figure dictated by a government policy. My life depends on the person next to me being able to perform their role as well as I can perform mine. You need to be a certain type of person to do this job both mentally and physically and we must recruit people from both sexes that meet the high standards that are set. Targeting females and males then lowering standards will not only endanger their lives, my life but also the public's. (Male, MFB, FF)

They sense insincerity in the Minister proclaiming gender diversity targets when long-standing policy gaps of significance to women firefighters have been given scant attention despite years of requests. One female firefighter makes the point:

Until the MFB sort out the issues surrounding the inadequate pregnancy policy and procedures they should not be trying to meet their quota of 5% female participation by 2018. They cannot adequately look after the females they currently have when pregnant let alone take on another 20-30 women of child bearing age. (Female, MFB, FF).

A similar point is made by this male firefighter:

MFB states that it wants to hire people from all types, but when I have asked to vary anything for me personally (within the rules and reason) then I have been told this cannot be done and am expected to be robot like and to accept I am to conform to their unwillingness to personalise any part of my equipment or employment conditions/options. (Male, MFB, FF)

The scepticism some have for the Minister's commitment to equity and diversity stems from a perception that she was joining the vilification campaign against career firefighters and their union by the VFBV, the Murdoch press, and Liberal-National politicians in the lead-up to the recent federal election.

I feel the media & Government have used women as a tool to discredit MFB / CFA career Firefighters by implying the staff in these organisations do not want women. This is incredibly wrong & in-accurate. I have been a professional [firefighter rank] with the MFB

who has over 30 years service. In this time I have worked with many Female Firefighters & have the utmost respect for equal opportunity. The female firefighters have worked hard to ensure the high standard is obtained/kept. When you talk with them, they all say they do not want the standard dropped, as it would put both firefighters & the public at risk. If you cannot drag hose, put up ladders & carry heavy equipment or carry a person who has had a cardiac arrest or unconscious, then you are not suitable for the job. As the reality is this is what we do. (MFB, Male FF).

Most comments similarly emphasise the need to be able to do the job as this male CFA firefighter attests:

Also there should not be a drop in standard to the recruit course program. It doesn't matter if you're male or female. If recruits can't complete a recruit course to the standard then they are not worthy of the career as a firefighter. The female FF's that I have worked with are incredibly intelligent and forward thinking within the role as a FF and physically capable of handling the requirements. I have much respect for them as they have gone through the same tough standards as we all have and I have much to learn from them. (Male, CFA, FF)

Another experienced MFB female fire fighter argues that while women have to work harder to gain acceptance, compromising recruitment processes is no answer:

Female firefighters have to earn respect far more than their male counterparts. Recruitment cannot be a quick fix. It must start with showing children the job is open to all genders. Media need to be taught gender neutral language. (Female, MFB, FF)

This was one of several comments arguing for alternate strategies for attracting more women applicants that don't entail cutting standards:

Targeted recruiting to try and get more females into the fire service would have been much more effective than restricting numbers of applicants and reducing standards. (Male, FF, MFB).

In regards to females vs males ratio, I believe the ratio of women employed should reflect the number of women vs men in society who actually have an interest in becoming a firefighter. I also believe to increase female numbers in the brigade marketing should be used, not this insane 350 male/350 female recruitment drive the MFB recently ran. (Male FF MFB).

Professional firefighters come from all races, genders and religions. If there is a dispute about this then the recruitment process should be move[d] to a blind application process. (No name, gender or age provided) this way the applicants are based purely upon merit. (MFB, Male, FF).

Many comments denounce the principle of recruitment according to gender, rather than ability to do the job.

Current women firefighters are respected for their professionalism and camaraderie not gender. A balance of gender doesn't mean a better fire service. A balance of gender in the work place shouldn't be the main focus. (Male, MFB, FF).

In clarification of the male : female ratio; It is my personal opinion that when you set recruitment targets outside the criteria of best person for the job, you are inevitably going to discriminate against a group. I don't care about the race, sex or religion of the people I work with as long as they are effective at their job and recruited under the same selection criteria. (Male, CFA, FF)

The question relating to respect requires an answer which is a generalisation. I think both male and female firefighters are respected or not respected on their attributes and the contributions they make. Respect is not gained by gender. Recruitment: To me gender

balance is less important than merit. It's the same as if I am undergoing a medical procedure or getting other professional help, I'm interested in skill level and results not gender. (Male, CFA, FF)

Several comments emphasised the need for assessment processes to be closely aligned to the evolving needs of the job, partly to ensure they are not unnecessarily exclusive of people whose life circumstances disadvantage them:

Not "compromising" recruit standards does not mean they can't be changed - there are so many barriers to people who are poor, have English as their second (or third) language or are women - they are both subtle and gross and deeply entrenched and not seen by those who have the privilege. The standard will still be very high (competition is very high so they will be able to stay high) they need to be better - broader and more relevant and actually valid. (MFB, Non-gender specific, FF)

In terms of recruitment, the standard to pass should never be compromised but the testing and forms of testing should be under ongoing review. This ensures relevance and effectiveness in determining an applicant's suitability for the job in an ever changing community who, for the most part, determine the role we play within it. (Male, MFB, FF).

There is an undercurrent of frustration with the exaggerated importance of gender balance as a sign of equity:

Gender should have no bearing on a recruits success. The best person should get the job. I am told it is gender equality to hire more female staff. I feel that is not the truth. Gender equality would mean the best person got the job for their merits. To give a position just because of the persons gender is not equal in any definition of the word. (CFA Male FF)

Blind applications for employment, where race, sex etc are not revealed, would stop all accusations of bias or discrimination and would ensure the best person for the job. The Victorian government has mandated this for some sections of the public service going forward, but insists that we must discriminate against better candidates to be politically correct and meet certain societal quotas. Will always need the best person for the job regardless of race, sex, religion.... (MFB, Male, FF)

Why should standards be lowered? A heterosexual male is the most discriminated person on earth at present. (CFA, Male, Non-operational fire service staff member)

All firefighters earn respect from others based on ability, not gender or race etc. (MFB, Male, FF)

In relation to recruiting it should always be the best candidate regardless of sex. (MFB, Male, FF)

For some, the argument that low gender diversity indicates discrimination is not defensible:

Much is made about MFB / CFA professional female firefighter numbers being 4 to 5 percent and that this is a sign of gender discrimination. Entry is based on merit which is derived from the written aptitude test and the interview stages. These are generally areas that females perform better at than males. CFA female volunteer operational numbers are only 15 percent. The higher percentage is a result of anyone being able to join the volunteer service without going through the pre-entry testing of the professional services. The low percentage in the professional ranks are not a result of discrimination but of the fact that firefighting is not a career that appeals to most females, it is dirty and unpleasant. A reverse comparison could be made in nursing. Only 11 percent of nurses nation wide are males, not because of discrimination but because nursing is not a career that appeals to most males. The MFB and CFA have targeted females in recruiting for twenty years.

Once female firefighters start their professional career they are subject to the same promotion standards and opportunities as males. Promotional pathways and standards are clearly established for all ranks and applied equally to all. (Male, MFB)

Typical comments show a positive regard for women firefighters and for maintaining assessment standards during recruitment exercises.

I am more than happy and comfortable working with and along side females in the fire service both professional and volunteer and look forward to increasing the ratios, however recruitment standards should not be compromised. (Male, CFA, FF)

I don't care if you're male or female, as long as you can do the job to the standards we have today. We cannot drop our recruit standards. (CFA, Male, FF)

The current recruit standards must no[t] be lowered. (MFB, Male, FF)

2.6.7 Conclusions regarding attitude to gender diversity

Taking this sequence of questions and comments as a whole, the attitude of the predominantly male career firefighter workforce appears to be very positive toward the presence of women firefighters, to the point that proportionally slightly more males than females believe greater gender diversity would be a positive development. From this, we may have more confidence in drawing a positive inference from the finding that 92% of male personnel believe women firefighters are respected as career firefighters.

If we accept this, given that over 94% of fire service personnel see maintaining firefighter and public safety as the first priority in their work, the fact that over 95% are opposed to compromising recruitment selection standards cannot reasonably be ascribed to an anti-female prejudice. What it means is that to increase the number of female firefighters, a more sophisticated recruitment process needs to be adopted that increases the number of female applicants and enables more to meet the entry standards without compromising those standards. For example, by:

- Educating the public, beginning at primary school, that there are firewomen as well as firemen, so that more girls grow up considering firefighting as a possible career path.
- Providing a generous pre-assessment training program to educate prospective female and male recruits of what the assessment process requires of them, and allow sufficient time (eg., 6 – 12 months) for them to develop their fitness and other tested attributes prior to assessment.
- Use creative targeted recruitment promotional strategies such as targeting women's sporting associations to increase the volume of physically capable women applicants.

Many respondents believe that while assessment procedures should always be revised to reflect what firefighter work actually requires of people, the option of pursuing gender diversity targets using short-cut methods such as lowering assessment standards when the rate of female applicants is low should be rejected. A common attitude is that new recruits need to prove themselves capable of doing the job in order for their colleagues to have the confidence to rely on them when team-working in challenging situations. Any suggestion that women are not expected to perform as well as men, or that standards are compromised to accommodate them, is disrespectful of current women firefighters and will do long term damage to the support that increased gender diversity currently has.

We do not know if male career firefighters feel they are respected or not, since we did not ask the question in relation to them. We do know that a significant proportion (9.1%) of women firefighters feel they are not respected, and that is a matter for concern.

In subsequent sections we will see that through the course of their sometimes very long careers with their present employers, male and female fire services staff report negative experiences in terms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. Whether these are legacy issues of past practices or the consequence of their present working environment, whether they are intended or

unintended offences, conscious or unconscious acts of commission or omission, it is important that avenues of correction and redress exist to ensure all staff feel safe among their colleagues and are accorded the respect their contributions merit.

3. Discrimination

3.1 Definition

The online questionnaire presented respondents with a list of protected attributes set out in section 6 of Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

As an online survey, there was no facility for nuanced clarification of explanations as to what constitutes discrimination in relation to these attributes in a legal sense, and we have no way of knowing how respondents interpreted the precise meaning of the attribute. Some minimal examples were provided to distinguish 'Employment Activity' from 'Industrial Activity', and to differentiate 'Sex' from 'Gender Identity', but there is some evidence in supporting comments that these distinctions were sometimes inconsistently applied among respondents.

3.2 Survey question

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 lists a set of 18 'protected attributes'. It is unlawful to treat a person adversely, in the workplace or elsewhere, just because they have one of these characteristics.

Treating someone adversely in a workplace may include not giving them opportunities for training or gaining experience, or not fairly considering them for promotion, or disadvantaging them personally or professionally in some other way.

Click on the boxes below to indicate if you have experienced adverse discrimination because of any of these reasons: (Check all that apply).

3.3 Respondents reporting whether they have experienced discrimination

Table 28 Both services, whether experienced discrimination or not, by gender and role

Respondents reporting experience of discrimination		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Not experienced discrimination	65.3	44.7	66.5	36.6	28.6	38.5	66.7	51.5	67.4
	Experienced discrimination	34.7	55.3	33.5	63.4	71.4	61.5	33.3	48.5	32.6
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	1.6	2.9	95.4	3.7	91.4
CFA	not experienced discrimination	52.8	44.4	53.3	42.3	33.3	45.0	53.6	50.0	53.8
	experienced discrimination	47.2	55.6	46.7	57.7	66.7	55.0	46.4	50.0	46.2
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	1.6	5.4	93.0	3.2	89.8
MFB	not experienced discrimination	74.3	44.8	76.1	26.7	25.0	16.7	75.8	52.4	76.9
	experienced discrimination	25.7	55.2	23.9	73.3	75.0	83.3	24.2	47.6	23.1
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	1.6	1.2	97.1	4.1	92.6

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-gender specific (not here identified). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

When considering the two fire services as a whole (Table 28), 34.7% respondents claimed to have experienced adverse treatment due to their identification with at least one of the protected attributes listed in the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Overall, a larger proportion of female respondents (55.3%) reported discrimination than did males (33.5%). Non-operational staff reported far higher levels of discrimination (63.4%) than did career firefighter respondents

(33.3%), including both for women (71.4% vs 48.5% respectively) and men (61.5% vs 32.6%). CFA respondents report experience of discrimination more frequently than MFB respondents (47.2% vs 25.7%), particularly among male respondents.

Table 29 Whether experienced discrimination or not, by length of service category

Respondents reporting experience of discrimination		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Not experienced discrimination	65.3	81.1	71.9	60.2	49.1	46.8	30.0	71.9	70.6	53.5
	Experienced discrimination	34.7	18.9	28.1	39.8	50.9	53.2	70.0	28.1	29.4	46.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	52.8	77.2	65.3	46.5	39.3	32.6	29.4	37.5	50.0	25.0
	Experienced discrimination	47.2	22.8	34.7	53.5	60.7	67.4	70.6	62.5	50.0	75.0
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	74.3	87.9	75.6	72.0	61.2	67.7	33.3	79.3	75.9	60.0
	Experienced discrimination	25.7	12.1	24.4	28.0	38.8	32.3	66.7	20.7	24.1	40.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Reported experience of discrimination progressively rises with length of service (Table 29), peaking at the cohort currently around 20-25 years of service (smallest cohort). This may be indicative of an improving situation over time, or reflective of the lack of a defined reporting period whereby more opportunities to experience discrimination accumulate over time, or both. Discrimination is experienced more frequently by CFA respondents than MFB respondents.

Table 30 Females, whether experienced discrimination or not, by length of service category

Females whether experienced discrimination by length of service category		All Female respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Not experienced discrimination	44.7	88.9	50.0	50.0	27.3	22.2	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
	Experienced discrimination	55.3	11.1	50.0	50.0	72.7	77.8	100.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	19.1	12.8	17.0	23.4	19.1	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	44.4	80.0	100.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Experienced discrimination	55.6	20.0	0.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	38.3	27.8	16.7	11.1	11.1	22.2	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	44.8	100.0	0.0	66.7	22.2	40.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
	Experienced discrimination	55.2	0.0	100.0	33.3	77.8	60.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	61.7	13.8	10.3	20.7	31.0	17.2	0.0	6.9	0.0	0.0

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females. Period covered not defined (up to 30 years of service).

Table 30 looks at the experience of discrimination by females and again suggests that discrimination is less likely among female staff with shorter length of service. Experiences of discrimination are reported to approximately equal degree in the CFA and MFB.

Table 31 looks at the experience of discrimination of males in the two services. Reported discrimination is highest among the 20-25 years of service cohort, and steadily declines as length of service reduces, a pattern that is apparent in both the CFA and MFB. CFA respondents report higher levels of discrimination than those employed in the MFB.

Table 31 Males, whether experienced discrimination or not, by length of service category

Males whether experienced discrimination by length of service category		Male respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35+ years
Both Services	Not experienced discrimination	66.5	80.7	72.5	61.2	51.5	50.7	33.3	72.2	70.6	53.5
	Experienced discrimination	33.5	19.3	27.5	38.8	48.5	49.3	66.7	27.8	29.4	46.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.2	11.9	8.0	2.2	15.9	13.1	5.1
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	53.3	77.1	63.0	48.8	39.0	35.7	33.3	37.5	50.0	25.0
	Experienced discrimination	46.7	22.9	37.0	51.2	61.0	64.3	66.7	62.5	50.0	75.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.3	27.2	13.0	11.6	16.7	11.9	4.2	6.8	6.2	2.3
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	76.1	87.0	77.6	72.7	70.0	76.0	33.3	79.8	75.9	60.0
	Experienced discrimination	23.9	13.0	22.4	27.3	30.0	24.0	66.7	20.2	24.1	40.0
	Cohort as % of total	57.7	11.2	17.6	9.1	8.3	5.2	0.6	22.6	18.0	7.3

Note: Sample comprises: 835 males. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 32 indicates there does not appear to be a strong correlation between one's age group and one's propensity to report being adversely treated due to association with a protected attribute, although the highest rate is reported by persons 20-24 (44.4%), a very small cohort, and the lowest by persons 50-54 (23.8%).

Table 32 Whether experienced discrimination or not by age cohort

Whether experienced discrimination by age cohort		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Not experienced discrimination	65.3	55.6	69.5	70.3	65.0	58.8	58.1	76.2	58.8	62.8
	experienced discrimination	34.7	44.4	30.5	29.7	35.0	41.2	41.9	23.8	41.2	37.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	52.8	33.3	67.3	59.7	56.3	50.0	50.0	45.7	26.7	53.8
	experienced discrimination	47.2	66.7	32.7	40.3	43.7	50.0	50.0	54.3	73.3	46.2
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	74.3	100.0	73.3	80.3	74.2	67.2	65.3	86.1	68.3	66.7
	experienced discrimination	25.7	0.0	26.7	19.7	25.8	32.8	34.7	13.9	31.7	33.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 33 Females whether experienced discrimination or not by age cohort

Whether experienced discrimination by age cohort		All female respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Not experienced discrimination	44.7	0.0	66.7	55.6	54.5	16.7	28.6	50.0	0.0	50.0
	experienced discrimination	55.3	0.0	33.3	44.4	45.5	83.3	71.4	50.0	100.0	50.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.0	6.4	19.1	23.4	12.8	14.9	17.0	2.1	4.3
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	44.4	0.0	100.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
	experienced discrimination	55.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	33.3	100.0	33.3	100.0	100.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	38.3	0.0	5.6	11.1	33.3	11.1	16.7	11.1	5.6	5.6
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	44.8	0.0	50.0	71.4	40.0	25.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0
	experienced discrimination	55.2	0.0	50.0	28.6	60.0	75.0	100.0	33.3	0.0	100.0
	Cohort as % of total	61.7	0.0	6.9	24.1	17.2	13.8	13.8	20.7	0.0	3.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females. Period covered not defined (up to 30 years of service).

Table 33 shows that there is no consistent pattern across female age cohorts to discrimination experienced when either fire service is considered separately, but appears generally to rise with age when considered together.

Table 34 Males whether experienced discrimination or not by age cohort

Whether experienced discrimination by age cohort		All male respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Not experienced discrimination	66.5	55.6	69.6	71.2	66.4	60.7	60.5	77.8	59.2	63.4
	experienced discrimination	33.5	44.4	30.4	28.8	33.6	39.3	39.5	22.2	40.8	36.6
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.1	9.5	14.1	15.0	13.4	10.3	16.2	15.6	4.9
CFA	Not experienced discrimination	53.3	33.3	66.7	61.7	55.4	51.8	48.8	48.5	27.6	50.0
	experienced discrimination	46.7	66.7	33.3	38.3	44.6	48.2	51.2	51.5	72.4	50.0
	Cohort as % of total	42.3	1.7	14.4	17.0	18.4	15.9	11.6	9.3	8.2	3.4
MFB	Not experienced discrimination	76.1	100.0	75.0	81.0	78.3	69.6	71.1	87.3	68.3	69.0
	experienced discrimination	23.9	0.0	25.0	19.0	21.7	30.4	28.9	12.7	31.7	31.0
	Cohort as % of total	57.7	0.6	5.8	12.0	12.4	11.6	9.3	21.2	21.0	6.0

Note: Sample comprises: 835 males. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 34 indicates that MFB males in each age cohort report less experience of discrimination than those in the CFA.

3.4 Forms of discrimination reported: both services

Turning now to the forms of discrimination that are being reported, of the 885 respondents, 307 people (26 female, 280 male, 1 non-gender specific) make reference to 567 experiences of where they believed they had been adversely treated because of their identification with one or more of the protected attributes listed under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The survey instrument permitted multiple selections.

Table 35 Adverse treatment due to association with a protected attribute – all services

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	All respondents	Females	Males	All non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Age	4.9	8.3	4.7	10.5	13.0	8.8	4.3	4.0	4.4
Breastfeeding	0.2	2.1	0.0	1.8	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	35.8	6.3	38.8	17.5	4.3	26.5	37.8	8.0	39.7
Gender Identity	1.4	10.4	0.4	1.8	4.3	0.0	1.4	16.0	0.4
Disability	0.7	2.1	0.6	1.8	4.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
Industrial Activity	33.9	10.4	36.3	22.8	13.0	29.4	35.1	8.0	36.8
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Marital Status	0.5	2.1	0.4	1.8	4.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Parental or Carer status	1.4	4.2	1.0	1.8	4.3	0.0	1.4	4.0	1.0
Physical Features	2.6	4.2	2.3	1.8	0.0	2.9	2.7	8.0	2.3
Political Belief	5.5	2.1	5.8	8.8	4.3	11.8	5.1	0.0	5.4
Pregnancy	1.1	12.5	0.0	1.8	4.3	0.0	1.0	20.0	0.0
Race	2.5	2.1	2.5	5.3	4.3	5.9	2.2	0.0	2.3
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	2.1	1.2	3.5	4.3	2.9	1.0	0.0	1.0
Sex	2.8	25.0	0.6	7.0	17.4	0.0	2.4	32.0	0.6
Sexual Orientation	0.2	0.0	0.2	1.8	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.9	6.3	4.9	10.5	13.0	8.8	4.3	0.0	4.6
Cohort as % of total	100.0	8.5	90.8	10.1	40.4	59.6	89.9	4.9	94.3

Note: Sample comprises: 26 females, 280 males, 1 person of non-specific gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 35 shows that, overall, the most frequently reported experiences of adverse treatment are because of the respondent's occupation (35.8% of reported discrimination) and for association with a union and lawful industrial activity (33.9%). These are clearly the most dominant issues for males (38.8% and 36.3% respectively), and although still significant concerns of females (6.3% and 10.4% respectively), being treated adversely because of their sex is more significant (25%), followed by adverse treatment due to pregnancy. Judging from the context of other comments some of the respondents reporting adverse treatment due to gender identity (10.4%) may actually be referring to discrimination due to being female. A larger proportion of female career firefighters report adverse treatment because of pregnancy (20%) than do non-operational females (4.3%).

A further question invited respondents who had indicated experience of adverse treatment due to one of the protected attributes to provide a description of what occurred. 81% of respondents who reported some form of discrimination supplied an explanatory comment.

Of the 248 respondents who supplied an explanatory comment, 31.9% said they were adversely treated because they were unionists, 2% reported anticipating or experiencing adverse treatment for not wishing to be unionists or disagreeing with union initiatives. 23.8% reported being abused or criticised in public for being a career firefighter, and 23.4% recount instances of volunteers directing hostile remarks and threatening behaviour at them for being career firefighters.

Career firefighters are denigrated as mercenaries for receiving wages to do the work that others volunteer to do, who lack the community-minded spirit of volunteers. 12.5% of comments describe instances where career firefighters (overwhelmingly CFA) are discriminated against in relation to volunteers. Examples include being held to more onerous standards of behaviour than the volunteers they work with, being denied the training opportunities provided to volunteers, being ostracized from brigade meetings or discussions because they are not volunteers. Many comment on the frequent reiteration by management that the CFA is a volunteer organisation, and give examples of its ignorance of the extent of the work performed by its career firefighters.

Table 36 Forms of reported adverse treatment due to protected attribute – both services by years of service

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Age	4.9	0.0	4.1	1.5	7.0	1.3	15.0	6.7	6.3	5.4
Breastfeeding	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	35.8	51.0	42.5	36.9	32.5	35.4	22.5	36.7	37.5	21.6
Gender Identity	1.4	0.0	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.7
Disability	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	3.3	0.0	2.7
Industrial Activity	33.9	27.5	35.6	38.5	31.6	30.4	20.0	43.3	41.7	35.1
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.7
Parental or Carer status	1.4	2.0	1.4	0.0	1.8	2.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.7
Physical Features	2.6	5.9	2.7	1.5	4.4	3.8	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
Political Belief	5.5	5.9	2.7	6.2	5.3	8.9	7.5	1.7	0.0	13.5
Pregnancy	1.1	2.0	1.4	3.1	0.9	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.5	3.9	1.4	1.5	2.6	1.3	5.0	1.7	2.1	5.4
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.9	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.1	5.4
Sex	2.8	0.0	1.4	1.5	3.5	6.3	7.5	1.7	2.1	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.9	2.0	4.1	4.6	7.0	5.1	7.5	3.3	6.3	2.7
Cohort as % of total	100.0	9.0	12.9	11.5	20.1	13.9	7.1	10.6	8.5	6.5

Note: Sample comprises: 26 females, 280 males, 1 non-specified gender. May include multiple responses per person. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 36 reports adverse treatment due to association with a protected attribute by 9 categories of years of service. The most frequently reported attributes occasioning adverse treatment, across all categories of length of service, are employment activity, industrial activity, political belief and age. Sex discrimination is reported with increasing frequency the longer the period of service, peaking at 7.5% of all staff at 20-25 years of service. This may be indicative of an improving trend in the fire services, consistent with the observations shared by several longer serving female respondents.

In Table 37 the 26 female survey participants that reported adverse treatment due to a protected attribute are classified by length of service.

Reported experiences of sex discrimination increase with length of service categories, and are the most significant concern for female staff with 10-15 and more years of service. Seven female firefighters, all with more than 10-15 years of experience, commented on their experience of discrimination due to their gender. They speak of having had to prove themselves capable of performing the role, ‘...having to break down the barriers and prove yourself to a higher standard than males’, of being initially met with scepticism from male counterparts. They observe a more welcoming and accepting attitude shown to new male transfers to their stations. There is also acknowledgement that ‘...as I got to know my crews it would generally grow into a friendlier environment. Overall I think that the males are wary of the females, until they get to know them’.

Where gender discrimination is openly expressed, it has attracted condemnation as in this instance (comment):

Only once in my entire career a fellow firefighter, using objectionable language, made it known that females shouldn't be firefighters. This firefighter wasn't supported by firefighters who witnessed the attack. They supported me and continue till this day. (Female, MFB, FF)

Four non-operational female staff report being spoken to in a disrespectful way ('sweetie') and of being denied opportunities or contracts for gender related reasons.

Table 37 Adverse treatment due to protected attribute
- female respondents by years of service

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	Females	0 - 3 years of service Female	3 - 6 years of service Female	6 - 10 years of service Female	10 - 15 years of service Female	15 - 20 years of service Female	20 - 25 years of service Female	25 - 30 years of service Female	30 - 35 years of service Female	35 years + Female
Age	8.3	0.0	16.7	14.3	11.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Breastfeeding	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	6.3	50.0	16.7	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gender Identity	10.4	0.0	16.7	0.0	11.8	9.1	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disability	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Industrial Activity	10.4	0.0	0.0	14.3	11.8	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	2.1	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parental or Carer status	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Physical Features	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Political Belief	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	12.5	50.0	16.7	28.6	5.9	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Belief or activity	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sex	25.0	0.0	16.7	14.3	23.5	36.4	25.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	6.3	0.0	16.7	14.3	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	3.3	10.0	11.7	28.3	18.3	6.7	1.7	0.0	0.0

Note: Sample comprises: 26 females making 48 references to discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 30+ years of service).

The treatment of staff during and after pregnancy is of greatest concern to female respondents with less than 10 years of service, and is still a significant concern for staff with 10-20 years of service. Comments in relation to pregnancy generally complain of a lack of procedure to follow in determining what roles staff should be allocated during different stages of pregnancy and on their return to work, and of arbitrary decisions to put them on day shift. This reflects a failure to understand the emotional support firefighters derive from their shift colleagues, and the difficulties they face in reorganising their households to accommodate being on day-shift.

The CFA station staff are unsure on what to do with pregnant female fire fighters as no procedure has been written for their job role during pregnancy and return to work from maternity leave. The station staff have been nothing but empathetic and supportive. (Female, CFA, FF)

Reflecting on her organisations' treatment of pregnant staff, another noted:

Until the MFB sort out the issues surrounding the inadequate pregnancy policy and procedures they should not me trying to meet their quota of 5% female participation by

2018. They cannot adequately look after the females they currently have when pregnant let alone take on another 20-30 women of child bearing age. (Female, MFB, FF).

Table 38 Adverse treatment due to protected attribute - male respondents by years of service

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	Males	0 - 3 years of service male	3 - 6 years of service male	6 - 10 years of service male	10 - 15 years of service male	15 - 20 years of service male	20 - 25 years of service male	25 - 30 years of service male	30 - 35 years of service male	35 years + male
Age	4.7	0.0	3.0	0.0	6.2	1.6	16.7	6.8	6.3	5.4
Breastfeeding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	38.8	51.0	44.8	41.4	37.1	43.8	25.0	37.3	37.5	21.6
Gender Identity	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7
Disability	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.7
Industrial Activity	36.3	28.6	38.8	41.4	35.1	34.4	22.2	44.1	41.7	35.1
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.7
Parental or Carer status	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	1.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7
Physical Features	2.3	6.1	3.0	1.7	4.1	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
Political Belief	5.8	6.1	3.0	6.9	5.2	10.9	8.3	1.7	0.0	13.5
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.5	4.1	1.5	1.7	3.1	0.0	5.6	1.7	2.1	5.4
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.1	5.4
Sex	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	2.1	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.9	2.0	3.0	3.4	7.2	6.3	8.3	3.4	6.3	2.7
Cohort as % of total	100.0	9.5	13.0	11.3	18.8	12.4	7.0	11.5	9.3	7.2

Note: Sample comprises: 280 males making 515 references to discrimination. May include multiple responses per person. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 38 reports male experience of discrimination by years of service, with adverse treatment most significantly due to the persons employment activity (eg. as a career firefighter) and industrial activity, across all years of service categories. Political beliefs and age discrimination are also prominently reported as areas of discrimination.

Age is not exclusively of concern to older workers, for although Table 39 reveals that it is the second most important issue for respondents over 60 (28.6% of them), it is also a significant concern for people in the 30 – 34 age group (7.4%). Respondents in all but the smallest cohort report experience of being adversely treated for their political views.

Table 39 Adverse treatment due to protected attribute – both services by age group

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Age	4.9	0.0	0.0	7.2	3.5	3.0	1.4	5.0	4.5	28.6
Breastfeeding	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	35.8	60.0	50.0	37.3	36.0	33.7	34.2	36.7	39.3	3.6
Gender Identity	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	1.4	3.3	1.1	3.6
Disability	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.2	3.6
Industrial Activity	33.9	40.0	40.5	27.7	34.9	30.7	34.2	36.7	34.8	39.3
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.3	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	3.6
Physical Features	2.6	0.0	2.4	4.8	3.5	2.0	2.7	3.3	1.1	0.0
Political Belief	5.5	0.0	2.4	6.0	3.5	8.9	6.8	5.0	3.4	7.1
Pregnancy	1.1	0.0	2.4	2.4	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.5	0.0	0.0	1.2	4.7	2.0	4.1	0.0	2.2	7.1
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.7	3.4	0.0
Sex	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.4	3.5	4.0	4.1	5.0	1.1	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.9	0.0	2.4	6.0	2.3	6.9	9.6	3.3	4.5	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.9	7.4	14.6	15.2	17.8	12.9	10.6	15.7	4.9

Note: Sample comprises: 26 females, 280 males, 1 non-specified gender. May include multiple responses per person. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 40 Adverse treatment due to protected attribute – both services females by age group

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	Females	20 - 24 Female	25 - 29 Female	30 - 34 Female	35 - 39 Female	40 - 44 Female	45 - 49 Female	50 - 54 Female	55 - 59 Female	60 + Female
Age	8.3	0.0	0.0	11.1	8.3	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	50.0
Breastfeeding	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	6.3	0.0	0.0	22.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gender Identity	10.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	12.5	25.0	50.0	0.0
Disability	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Industrial Activity	10.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	2.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parental or Carer status	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Physical Features	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
Political Belief	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	12.5	0.0	100.0	22.2	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Belief or activity	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
Sex	25.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	16.7	33.3	37.5	37.5	0.0	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
with the above attributes	6.3	0.0	0.0	11.1	8.3	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.0	1.7	15.0	20.0	10.0	13.3	13.3	3.3	3.3

Note: Sample comprises: 26 females reporting 48 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 30 years of service).

Table 40 reports the areas of discrimination experienced by those 55.3% of female fire service employees who report discrimination in different age categories. Sex discrimination is the most frequently reported form of discrimination across five out of nine age groups, with some evidence to suggest that some respondents confused the issue of gender identity with sex discrimination which would make it the prominent issue for women in six out of nine length of service cohorts. Inadequate support during pregnancy is the next most significant issue for women under 45, followed by industrial activity discrimination and age discrimination.

In Table 41 males in all age groups primarily report a concern for discrimination because of their employment activity followed closely by their industrial activity. Those over 60 are particularly conscious of age discrimination. Adverse treatment due to political beliefs is more consistently reported across age cohorts.

Table 41 Adverse treatment due to protected attribute – both services males by age group

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	Males	20 - 24 male	25 - 29 male	30 - 34 male	35 - 39 male	40 - 44 male	45 - 49 male	50 - 54 male	55 - 59 male	60 + male
Age	4.7	0.0	0.0	6.8	2.9	3.2	1.5	3.8	4.6	26.9
Breastfeeding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	38.8	60.0	51.2	39.2	42.9	35.8	38.5	42.3	40.2	3.8
Gender Identity	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Disability	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	3.8
Industrial Activity	36.3	40.0	41.5	31.1	40.0	32.6	35.4	42.3	35.6	38.5
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Physical Features	2.3	0.0	2.4	5.4	2.9	1.1	3.1	1.9	1.1	0.0
Political Belief	5.8	0.0	2.4	6.8	2.9	9.5	7.7	5.8	3.4	7.7
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	2.5	0.0	0.0	1.4	4.3	2.1	4.6	0.0	2.3	7.7
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
Sex	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.9	0.0	2.4	5.4	1.4	7.4	9.2	3.8	4.6	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	8.0	14.4	13.6	18.4	12.6	10.1	16.9	5.0

Note: Sample comprises: 280 males reporting 517 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

3.5 Forms of discrimination: CFA

47.2% of CFA staff report adverse treatment in relation to a protected attribute, with employment activity (40.4%), industrial activity (32.0%), political belief (5.3%) and age discrimination (4.7%) being of greatest concern, with women reporting proportionally more discrimination (55.6%) than men (46.7%).

Table 42 shows that CFA male staff in both non-operational and career firefighter roles most frequently report that their discrimination is due to their employment activity (33.3% and 43.3% respectively), and secondly because of their industrial activity (28.6% and 34.1% respectively). Sex discrimination is the most significant issue for female staff, and more significant for non-

operational staff (33.3%) than for female firefighters (18.2%). Discrimination due to political beliefs is a more significant issue for non-operational males (14.3%) and females (8.3%) than for their career firefighter colleagues (4.8% and 0.0% respectively). Age discrimination is equally significant to both career firefighter and non-operational males (4.8%), but more significant (8.3%) for non-operational females than for female firefighters (0.0%). Conversely, discrimination due to pregnancy is more significant to women firefighters (18.2%) than non-operational females (0.0%). Poor support for parental and carer status is of greater concern to non-operational (8.3%) and firefighter females (9.1%) than males (0.0% and 0.7% respectively).

Table 42 Forms of discrimination reported in the CFA by gender and role

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	CFA respondents	CFA females	CFA Males	CFA non-operational staff	CFA Non Operational females	CFA Non Operational males	CFA Career firefighters	CFA Career firefighter females	CFA Career firefighter males
Age	4.7	4.3	4.8	6.1	8.3	4.8	4.6	0.0	4.8
Breastfeeding	0.3	4.3	0.0	3.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	40.4	8.7	42.7	24.2	8.3	33.3	42.1	9.1	43.3
Gender Identity	0.9	8.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	18.2	0.3
Disability	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Industrial Activity	32.0	8.7	33.8	18.2	0.0	28.6	33.6	18.2	34.1
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Marital Status	0.9	4.3	0.6	3.0	8.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Parental or Carer status	1.2	8.7	0.6	3.0	8.3	0.0	1.0	9.1	0.7
Physical Features	2.7	4.3	2.5	3.0	0.0	4.8	2.6	9.1	2.4
Political Belief	5.3	4.3	5.4	12.1	8.3	14.3	4.6	0.0	4.8
Pregnancy	0.6	8.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	18.2	0.0
Race	0.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	4.3	1.0	6.1	8.3	4.8	0.7	0.0	0.7
Sex	2.4	26.1	0.6	12.1	33.3	0.0	1.3	18.2	0.7
Sexual Orientation	0.3	0.0	0.3	3.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	5.0	4.3	5.1	6.1	8.3	4.8	4.9	0.0	5.1
Cohort as % of total	59.4	6.8	93.2	9.8	36.4	63.6	90.2	3.6	96.4

Note: Sample comprises: 175 staff (10 females, 165 males) reporting 337 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 43 relates reported discrimination to different length of service categories, with employment activity and industrial activity consistently the most significant issues for respondents across all length of service cohorts, with political beliefs being an issue for the longest serving staff, and those with less than 25 years service. Adverse treatment due to physical features is also an issue for more recent recruits, as is pregnancy. Table 44 considers reported discrimination against different age groups, with discrimination due to employment activity being the most significant issue for all age cohorts but the most senior, where age discrimination is the greater concern. Adverse treatment due to industrial treatment is the second most significant issue for respondents in all age categories.

Table 43 Forms of discrimination in the CFA by length of service

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	CFA respondents	CFA 0 - 3 years of service	CFA 3 - 6 years of service	CFA 6 - 10 years of service	CFA 10 - 15 years of service	CFA 15 - 20 years of service	CFA 20 - 25 years of service	CFA 25 - 30 years of service	CFA 30 - 35 years of service	CFA 35 years +
Age	4.7	0.0	5.6	2.5	3.8	1.8	14.3	8.0	12.5	0.0
Breastfeeding	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	40.4	52.5	44.4	42.5	38.5	42.9	22.9	40.0	50.0	18.2
Gender Identity	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	1.8	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disability	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	9.1
Industrial Activity	32.0	30.0	33.3	40.0	32.1	32.1	17.1	40.0	31.3	36.4
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.6	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	9.1
Parental or Carer status	1.2	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.3	1.8	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Physical Features	2.7	5.0	5.6	0.0	5.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Political Belief	5.3	5.0	2.8	2.5	6.4	7.1	8.6	0.0	0.0	18.2
Pregnancy	0.6	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	0.9	2.5	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	9.1
Sex	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.5	1.3	5.4	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	5.0	2.5	5.6	2.5	7.7	3.6	8.6	4.0	6.3	0.0
Cohort as % of total	59.4	11.9	10.7	11.9	23.1	16.6	10.4	7.4	4.7	3.3

Note: Sample comprises: 175 staff (10 females, 165 males) reporting 337 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 44 Forms of discrimination in the CFA by age group

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	CFA respondents	CFA 20 - 24	CFA 25 - 29	CFA 30 - 34	CFA 35 - 39	CFA 40 - 44	CFA 45 - 49	CFA 50 - 54	CFA 55 - 59	CFA 60 +
Age	4.7	0.0	0.0	8.8	1.9	4.5	0.0	5.4	5.4	37.5
Breastfeeding	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	40.4	60.0	53.1	36.8	41.5	35.8	46.3	35.1	45.9	0.0
Gender Identity	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.7	0.0
Disability	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	12.5
Industrial Activity	32.0	40.0	37.5	29.8	35.8	28.4	31.7	35.1	27.0	37.5
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.9	1.5	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
Physical Features	2.7	0.0	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.0	2.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
Political Belief	5.3	0.0	3.1	5.3	3.8	7.5	4.9	8.1	5.4	0.0
Pregnancy	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.5	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Belief or activity	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.5	0.0	2.7	2.7	0.0
Sex	2.4	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.9	4.5	2.4	5.4	0.0	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
Association with a person with the above attributes	5.0	0.0	3.1	7.0	1.9	7.5	7.3	5.4	2.7	0.0
Cohort as % of total	59.4	1.5	9.5	16.9	15.7	19.9	12.2	11.0	11.0	2.4

Note: Sample comprises: 175 staff (10 females, 165 males) reporting 337 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

3.6 Forms of discrimination: MFB

Turning now to survey respondents employed by the MFB who report an experience of discrimination (Table 45). We see a lower overall degree of reported discrimination, as compared to the CFA, with discrimination due to industrial activity being the principle reported concern of male and female non-operational staff, and male career firefighters. Overall, female career firefighters that report experiencing discrimination are most concerned with sexual discrimination (42.9%), discrimination due to pregnancy (21.4%) and gender identity (14.3%), though it is possible some respondents took the latter to mean sexual discrimination.

Table 45 Forms of discrimination reported in the MFB by gender and role

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	MFB respondents	MFB females	MFB Males	MFB non-operational staff	MFB Non-Operational females	MFB Non-Operational males	MFB Career firefighters	MFB Career firefighter females	MFB Career firefighter males
Age	5.2	12.0	4.5	16.7	18.2	15.4	3.9	7.1	3.7
Breastfeeding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	29.1	4.0	32.8	8.3	0.0	15.4	31.6	7.1	34.0
Gender Identity	2.2	12.0	0.5	4.2	9.1	0.0	1.9	14.3	0.5
Disability	0.9	4.0	0.5	4.2	9.1	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
Industrial Activity	36.5	12.0	40.3	29.2	27.3	30.8	37.4	0.0	41.0
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.7	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.6
Physical Features	2.6	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	7.1	2.1
Political Belief	5.7	0.0	6.5	4.2	0.0	7.7	5.8	0.0	6.4
Pregnancy	1.7	16.0	0.0	4.2	9.1	0.0	1.5	21.4	0.0
Race	4.8	4.0	5.0	12.5	9.1	15.4	3.9	0.0	4.3
Religious Belief or activity	1.3	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.6
Sex	3.5	24.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	42.9	0.5
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.8	8.0	4.5	16.7	18.2	15.4	3.4	0.0	3.7
Cohort as % of total	100.0	10.9	87.4	10.4	45.8	54.2	89.6	6.8	91.3

Note: Sample comprised 132 MFB respondents (16 female, 115 male, and 1 non-gender specific) reported 230 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 46 suggests that MFB personnel with less than 6 years of service have felt most attacked because of their profession as 40-45% of those that report discrimination say it is due to their employment activity. Industrial activity is the more significant issue for staff with more than 6 years of service. The next most common issues relate to political beliefs (most prevalent among those with 15-20 and 35+ years of service) and age (most prominent among those with 10-15 years of service). Discrimination due to race appears quite significant to several length of service cohorts (13% of those 20-25 years and 9.1% of those 0-3 years).

Table 46 Forms of discrimination reported in the MFB by length of service

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	MFB respondents	MFB 0 - 3 years of service	MFB 3 - 6 years of service	MFB 6 - 10 years of service	MFB 10 - 15 years of service	MFB 15 - 20 years of service	MFB 20 - 25 years of service	MFB 25 - 30 years of service	MFB 30 - 35 years of service	MFB 35 years +
Age	5.2	0.0	2.7	0.0	13.9	0.0	20.0	5.7	3.1	7.7
Breastfeeding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	29.1	45.5	40.5	28.0	19.4	17.4	20.0	34.3	31.3	23.1
Gender Identity	2.2	0.0	2.7	0.0	5.6	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Disability	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Industrial Activity	36.5	18.2	37.8	36.0	30.6	26.1	40.0	45.7	46.9	34.6
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.7	9.1	0.0	0.0	2.8	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Physical Features	2.6	9.1	0.0	4.0	2.8	8.7	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0
Political Belief	5.7	9.1	2.7	12.0	2.8	13.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	11.5
Pregnancy	1.7	0.0	2.7	8.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	4.8	9.1	2.7	4.0	5.6	4.3	20.0	2.9	3.1	7.7
Religious Belief or activity	1.3	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.8
Sex	3.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	8.3	8.7	0.0	2.9	3.1	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.8	0.0	2.7	8.0	5.6	8.7	0.0	2.9	6.3	3.8
Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.8	16.1	10.9	15.7	10.0	2.2	15.2	13.9	11.3

Note: Sample comprised 132 MFB respondents (16 female, 115 male, and 1 non-gender specific) reported 230 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 47 Forms of discrimination reported in the MFB by age group

While working for the fire service, have you experienced adverse treatment because of your:	MFB respondents	MFB 20 - 24	MFB 25 - 29	MFB 30 - 34	MFB 35 - 39	MFB 40 - 44	MFB 45 - 49	MFB 50 - 54	MFB 55 - 59	MFB 60 +
Age	5.2	0.0	0.0	3.8	6.1	0.0	3.1	4.3	3.8	25.0
Breastfeeding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment Activity	29.1	0.0	40.0	38.5	27.3	29.4	18.8	39.1	34.6	5.0
Gender Identity	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	8.7	0.0	5.0
Disability	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	1.9	0.0
Industrial Activity	36.5	0.0	50.0	23.1	33.3	35.3	37.5	39.1	40.4	40.0
Lawful Sexual Activity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marital Status	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parental or Carer status	1.7	0.0	0.0	3.8	3.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Physical Features	2.6	0.0	0.0	7.7	3.0	0.0	3.1	4.3	1.9	0.0
Political Belief	5.7	0.0	0.0	7.7	3.0	11.8	9.4	0.0	1.9	10.0
Pregnancy	1.7	0.0	10.0	3.8	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Race	4.8	0.0	0.0	3.8	9.1	2.9	6.3	0.0	3.8	10.0
Religious Belief or activity	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0
Sex	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.8	6.1	2.9	6.3	4.3	1.9	0.0
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Association with a person with the above attributes	4.8	0.0	0.0	3.8	3.0	5.9	12.5	0.0	5.8	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.0	4.3	11.3	14.3	14.8	13.9	10.0	22.6	8.7

Note: Sample comprised 132 MFB respondents (16 female, 115 male, and 1 non-gender specific) reported 230 experiences of discrimination. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 47 which considers the age of the 25.7% of MFB respondents who report discrimination, show that in all but one age cohort they most often feel discriminated for being union members undertaking industrial activity, followed closely by being discriminated due to their profession. Respondents over 60 report their second most frequent form of discrimination (25%) relates to age discrimination. Adverse treatment due to political beliefs is the third greatest concern of some age cohorts (30-34, 40-44 and 60+), while racial discrimination is the third most significant issue (9.1%) for those aged 35-39.

3.7 Discussion on discrimination

34.7% of fire services personnel responding to this survey feel that they have been adversely treated because of their association with a protected attribute listed under the Victorian Equal Opportunity 2010 Act. Women respondents report proportionally more discrimination than males, and to a fairly equal degree in both services, whereas twice as many CFA males report discrimination as MFB males.

The key difference here is in relation to the main source (43.3%) of discrimination for CFA firefighters, which is the adverse treatment they feel they receive as paid firefighters in a volunteer-oriented organisation. This evidently takes many forms: including being barred from training and other opportunities to develop experience because these are for volunteers only; not being included in brigade meetings or discussions because they are paid staff; not being acknowledged for doing exemplary work; not being permitted to remove people from trapped vehicles (because this must be left for volunteers); not being called to fires when they are able to respond the fastest (because a volunteer brigade leader does not want career firefighters to respond); etc. They describe themselves as being regarded as a 'necessary evil' the CFA must bear, to enable it to cling to its territory in the face of population and urban growth, and the demographic changes these cause that are undermining its volunteer-based model of fire service protection.

As a consequence of the 'hands-off the CFA' campaign conducted by the VFBV, the Herald Sun and others in the ten months prior to the Federal election, many were accosted in the street, spat at, abused and denigrated on social media, threatened by members of the public when responding to fires, their children were bullied at school, etc., because they were *paid* firefighters. Most troubling for some is that the leadership of the CFA failed to take any action to reign in this behaviour. Under the Equal Opportunity Act omitting to do an act to prevent discrimination can be the same as doing a discriminatory act (EEO, 2010: section 11).

The largest source of discrimination in the MFB, and the second largest in the CFA, involved being a union member and / or taking lawful industrial action. With so many people in the union it would be difficult to conduct the organisation's work without union members involved. Nevertheless, some report being excluded from meetings that someone in their position would normally be expected to attend, being blocked for promotion for being a union member, being abused by senior staff for being a union member, or partaking in a union event. While some respondents say they have been vilified by the public and volunteers for being *paid* as firefighters, others attribute it to being a union member, which in 90% of cases is the same thing. Again, many cite the inaction of their employer to correct the record concerning falsehoods in the press that they knew to be incorrect as another example of adverse treatment because of their industrial activity.

25% of the female respondents reported experiencing sex discrimination at some time in their fire service career, and this may actually be larger given that some may have meant sex discrimination when they selected 'gender identity'. They complain of being treated differently because of gender ("Being treated differently to other new male officers by commander in exactly the same circumstances by on-shift commander"), comments that they were promoted because of their gender, being assumed to be administration staff because of their gender, being prevented from undertaking tasks they felt they were capable of doing because of their gender.

The 12.5% of female references to pregnancy as a source of discrimination is also significant, and covers a range of issues such as unclear leave arrangements, return to work arrangements, modified uniforms to accommodate pregnancy, the right to judge capacity to carry out different duties on the basis of a treating physician's opinion, alternate forms of shift work for when hot-zone work is not appropriate.

Discrimination for one's political beliefs is significant for 5.8% of males reporting discrimination, but little is offered by way of explanation as to how this manifests itself. Inevitably, while firefighters were being attacked by one side of politics, there must have been some among them who support that side of politics, which must have been awkward for them. Some respondents express a critical view of what they consider a politically correct doctrine (eg, gender diversity), and one states they were instructed by a senior officer to keep their views to themselves. It is possible these are the sort of political discrimination issues referred to here but we cannot know.

Age discrimination is an issue for 6.8% of males in the 30-35 age group and for 26.9% in the 60+ age group. An experienced operator in his 30s complains of not being given a promotional opportunity on the basis of his youth, while older workers are pressured to retire, even when they feel they are doing the job well.

It is interesting that non-operational staff report significantly higher rates of discrimination than career firefighters, particularly in the MFB (73.3% vs 24.2%) and less so in the CFA (57.7% vs 46.4%), with their industrial activity (22.8%), employment activity (17.5%), age (10.5%) and association with others (10.5%) being the principle areas of concern. We cannot know if their greater physical proximity to senior management is a factor in this.

Some respondents indicate they have had racial insults directed at them, or have been in the presence of others making racist remarks that significantly offended. People also feel deeply upset by jokes and slurs made about gay people in their presence, when several of their close relatives are gay.

An online survey does not provide a means for testing the perceptions of respondents as to the veracity of their claims of discrimination. It is possible for adverse treatment of a person with a protected attribute to be unrelated to the protected attribute, where its actual cause may not be apparent to the affected person.

Nevertheless, this data does show a significant number of staff feel that they have been adversely treated or offended because of a protected attribute they possess.

4. Bullying

4.1 Definition and methodological issues

The measurement of the prevalence of bullying poses challenges that have remained unresolved despite significant efforts to gain traction on them over the past 20 years. Various labels such as 'workplace bullying', 'mobbing', 'harassment', 'workplace abuse', the quest for meaningfully comparable data as to its prevalence is undermined by differences in definitions used in different studies and with how those definitions are operationalised in research practice (Crawshaw, 2009: 263).

As there is no commonly accepted definition of bullying, the operational criteria used to measure prevalence and incidence of bullying varies from study to study. A number of authors have measured the prevalence of bullying by directly asking participants whether they have been exposed to bullying within a particular time frame, such as 6 months (Einarsen and Skogstad 1996; Mikkelsen and Einarsen 2001; Leymann 1992; Salin 2001; Bjorkqvist et al. 1994; Hoel et al. 2001; Quine 1999). Others have measured the prevalence of bullying at work using a list of negative acts (Einarsen and Raknes 1997; Mikkelsen and Einarsen 2001; Leymann 1992; Hoel et al. 2001), and some have used both methods to estimate the prevalence of bullying at work. For the purpose of this study, bullying was measured by first presenting a definition of bullying and then asking participants whether they have been exposed to bullying within the last 12 months (Ortega, et.al, 2009: 417).

And again:

On the basis of existing research, it is difficult to make accurate estimates of the prevalence of bullying. In former studies frequencies vary from 1-10% of employees (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Høgh & Døfradottir, 2001; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002; Salin, 2001; Vartiainen, 1996) to between 20_ 50% (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; McGuckin, Lewis, & Shevlin, 2001; Niedl, 1996; Quine, 1999; Rayner, 1997). These variations in frequencies may be caused by differences in the culture or quality of work environment within a given organization or branch (e.g. industrial vs. white-collar employment, manufacturing companies vs. for example healthcare services) or they may be due to potential national differences in prevalence levels (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). Yet, to a large extent they may also be ascribed to the way bullying is measured (e.g. whether operational criteria, i.e. daily or weekly exposure to negative acts for a period of 6 months, or subjective criteria, i.e. self-reported exposure to bullying), have been employed (see Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Salin, 2001 or Zapf et al., 2003 for a discussion). Finally, prevalence levels may have been influenced by methodological problems such as low response rates as well as variations in the wording of definitions and/or in criteria regarding frequency (e.g. once a week vs. once or twice within the past year) and duration (e.g. exposure within 'the past six months', 'during the previous year' or 'ever in the career') (Agervold and Mikkelsen, 2004: 337).

Leymann (1996) defined bullying as hostile and unethical communication that is distinguished from other forms of workplace conflict and aggression by its being very frequent (at least twice per week) and persistent (lasting six months), and producing of psychological, psychosomatic and social misery (168). Elaboration on this work led to four common elements appearing in most definitions: frequency and duration, the reaction of the target (psychological distress), the balance of power and the intent of the perpetrator (Agervold, 2007: 163). Leading Scandinavian researchers thus include:

... harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of

systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict (Einarsen et al., 2003: 15).

A complicating factor is that it is often defined not only by the actions of the perpetrator but by how they are perceived by their target:

...on the one hand is 'a social interaction in which the sender uses verbal and/or non-verbal communication regularly, weekly and for a period of at least six months, that is characterised by negative and aggressive elements directed toward the personality and self-esteem of the receiver', and on the other, of how 'a person perceives or feels that he is being bullied when he...experiences such verbal and non-verbal communication as intentionally negative and as constituting a threat to his self-esteem and personality' (Agervold, 2007: 197).

Each of these definition elements has attracted criticism for arbitrarily excluding significantly undesirable behaviour from consideration, or for defying practical application in research. Some forms of bullying behaviour are so overt, such as verbal abuse and threats of violence, that we might assume the reaction of the target, the (perceived) power balance between perpetrator and target, and the intent of the perpetrator should not need to be established to identify the behaviour as bullying. It is, however, possible for old and dear friends to routinely insult each other in the most disparaging ways *as a mark of endearment*, because their intent in doing so is firmly understood by each other not to be hostile. An unfamiliar onlooker may yet be disturbed by their interaction.

However, in more covert forms of bullying behaviour much rests on the perception of the person experiencing it as to the intent of the perpetrator. Psychological harm done to a bullying target largely arises from their perception that someone with the power to affect them wishes to do them harm. "...if the aggressor is not ascribed consciousness and the intention of doing damage, his action must be put down to ignorance or chance which could easily be corrected in the course of a conversation" (Agervold, 2007: 163; Keashley, 2001).

However a perception of hostile intent, though a critical element of the definition, may or may not be accurate. An act by a manager that is contrary to the needs and wishes of a staff member, such as a transfer or a change of duties, may be considered a hostile act, yet it may solely be due to operational necessity. Then again, it may be an act of vindictive persecution camouflaged under a pretence of operational necessity. It is an element of the definition that confounds operationalising in research: even if we could ask the perpetrator to clarify their intent, how could we know if they told the truth?

The duration and frequency elements of common bullying definitions are both arbitrary and insensitive to the dynamics of bullying relationships. By specifying an arbitrary qualifying period of duration much behaviour done with harmful intent, and causing long term damage, is ignored, such as that which forces the victim to quit in less than 6 months. Frequency criteria, such as two aggressive acts per week, also fail to accommodate the dynamics of bullying relationships. Once intimidated by a single unanticipated aggressive act, a victim may experience recurring stress with very few repetitions, simply by being in their aggressor's presence. Victims may adopt defensive / avoidance behaviours, such as not asking for an entitlement, or accepting demands made of them that they would normally resist, for fear of eliciting another outburst or snide comment. Thus the stress and disempowerment arising from bullying can be perpetuated and reinforced without frequent overt acts.

In addition to the need for a workable definition that well describes the phenomenon and lends itself to operationalising in research, some promote standardised survey methods such as the adoption of the Negative Attributes Questionnaire (NAQ) that lists examples of behaviour that are deemed to exemplify bullying. The NAQ list is divided into three sections:

1. Work-related bullying

- Someone withholding information which affects your performance;
- Being ordered to do work below your level of competence;
- Having your opinions ignored;
- Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines;
- Excessive monitoring of your work;
- Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses);
- Being exposed to an unmanageable workload.

2. Person-related bullying

- Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work;
- Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks;
- Spreading of gossip and rumours about you;
- Being ignored or excluded;
- Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life;
- Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job;
- Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes;
- Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach;
- Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes;
- Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with;
- Having allegations made against you;
- Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm.

3. Physically intimidating bullying

- Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger;
- Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way;
- Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse (Einarsen et al, 2009: 32).

The drawback of soliciting this information in this form is that while these are common bullying activities they may not be definitive, and do not necessarily capture the nuances of hostile behaviour that may arise in organisations with atypical structures, histories and cultures as might be said of Victoria's fire services. For example, not being recognised for exemplary work you performed alongside others who were recognised, may not fit neatly into an NAQ category, but given the culture of the fire services could well be a thinly disguised way of denigrating a staff member, or at least may be considered so.

Caponecchia and Wyatt (2009) note a tendency throughout the law and literature to blur the distinctions between discrimination, bullying, harassment and other forms of workplace violence and aggression. Some of these distinctions are not evident in present legal definitions, they argue, but if the objective of research and analysis is to improve workplaces, making these distinctions is critical to understanding the phenomena we seeking to manage. Clarifying some of these distinctions in an Australian context, they describe harassment:

... as behaviour that causes humiliation, offence or intimidation on the basis of another person's race, gender, sexuality, ethno-religious background, disability/disease, marital status, age or other characteristic that is endemic to that individual, or their relationship to someone with any of these characteristics. The grounds for harassment are worded slightly differently in the various Australian anti-discrimination laws, but the idea that harassment

must be on the basis of a characteristic of the target is common across the legislation (both here and overseas) (Caponecchia and Wyatt, 2009: 442).

This is distinct from discrimination which is focused on *unfair treatment* of a person on the basis of personal characteristics (gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.). The definition of bullying, on the other hand, does not require the offending behaviour to be directed at a personal trait at all. Bullying is further distinguished by the notion that it must be frequent and sustained over a prolonged period of time, while a one-off racist or similar slur is sufficient to constitute harassment. They add however that:

It is important to note that an isolated event should not be disregarded because it does not fit the [duration] criteria for bullying (or [personal attribute element of] harassment). It could still cause harm, and may serve as a warning sign for an emerging pattern of bullying behaviour. It may also indicate bullying behaviour that is targeted at several individuals in a workgroup, rather than repeated behaviour that is targeted at an individual (similar to a recent case in the Australian public sector) (Caponecchia and Wyatt, 2009: 443).

It is for this reason that in the present study, we have considered it to be more useful, in terms of informing policy moving forward, to capture evidence of the characteristics of any negative behaviours staff wished to report, and their views on how their organisation engages with their issue, etc., rather than imposing a narrow definition that would ignore some experiences for the sake of quasi-objective measurement. We can to some extent subsequently impose definitions on what they report, for example, by also reporting the characteristics of currently experienced bullying that has been of longer than six months duration. We considered there are sufficient doubts as to the validity of bullying prevalence comparisons to justify not making this the sole focus of the study. In a similar way we also opted not to undertake a randomised sampling approach in this study, but to invite all UFU members of the MFB and CFA to undertake the survey.

4.2 Survey question

Experience of bullying

Workplace bullying is where a person or group of people are subjected to persistent attempts to undermine their professional or social standing, through hostile acts intended to intimidate, humiliate, isolate or otherwise undermine them.

It can take the form of overt verbal abuse or threats of violence, or subtle forms such as spreading malicious lies or rumours about someone, withholding information they need to perform their job, undermining their work-effectiveness, routinely dismissing their input on matters affecting their work, providing too much work or too little work to do, publicly demeaning them.

It can happen at all levels of an organisation, and can be directed at an individual or a group.

14. While a fire service employee have you personally experienced bullying behaviour directed at you? Yes / No

4.3 Experience of bullying and other workplace aggression – both services

We first report all responses irrespective of reported durations or recentness of experience, thus some references may relate to one-off events that occurred 30 years ago. While many of these experiences may not constitute bullying by some definitions, they do constitute some form of workplace aggression being directed at the respondent.

Table 48 Whether or not experienced bullying – both services by gender and role

While a fire service employee have you personally experienced bullying behaviour directed at you?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Yes	31.8	44.7	30.9	78.0	78.6	80.8	29.5	30.3	29.3
	No	68.2	55.3	69.1	22.0	21.4	19.2	70.5	69.7	70.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	1.6	2.9	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Yes	41.2	44.4	17.4	80.8	83.3	61.5	38.3	25.0	15.9
	No	58.8	55.6	24.9	19.2	16.7	15.4	61.7	75.0	25.2
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	2.9	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Yes	24.9	44.8	23.4	73.3	75.0	83.3	23.4	33.3	22.7
	No	75.1	55.2	76.6	26.7	25.0	16.7	76.6	66.7	77.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	1.7	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 48 of 885 survey respondents, 604 (68%), comprising 218 CFA and 386 MFB staff, expressed the view that they had not been subject to bullying in their fire service careers, and 281 (31.8%), comprising 153 CFA and 128 MFB staff, believed they had been bullied. Proportionally more non-operational staff (78%) report being bullied than do career firefighters (29.5%), including females (78.6% to 30.3%) and males (80.8% to 29.3%). Bullying has been experienced by more CFA respondents than MFB respondents (41.2% vs 24.9%), and by proportionally more females than males (44.7% vs 30.9%). 83.3% of non-operational female CFA respondents feel they have been bullied compared to 25% of CFA career firefighter females, with MFB female non-operational staff vs career firefighter comparison being 75% vs 33.3%.

Table 49 presents reported experiences of bullying in both services by length of service for both CFA and MFB. Staff with longer terms of service are more likely to record an experience of bullying. In both services, respondents with around 20-25 years of service report the greatest proportion of bullying experiences (CFA 88.2% and MFB 66.7%). Newer staff (less than six years service) report the least experience of bullying (CFA between 12.9% and 26.5%, MFB between 5.2% and 16.7%).

Table 49 Whether or not experienced bullying – both services by length of service

While a fire service employee have you personally experienced bullying behaviour directed at you?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Yes	31.8	10.1	20.1	31.2	55.5	55.8	85.0	28.9	26.6	44.2
	No	68.2	89.9	79.9	68.8	44.5	44.2	15.0	71.1	73.4	55.8
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
CFA	Yes	41.2	12.9	26.5	30.2	65.6	69.6	88.2	58.3	31.8	75.0
	No	58.8	87.1	73.5	69.8	34.4	30.4	11.8	41.7	68.2	25.0
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Yes	24.9	5.2	16.7	32.0	42.9	35.5	66.7	22.5	25.3	37.1
	No	75.1	94.8	83.3	68.0	57.1	64.5	33.3	77.5	74.7	62.9
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 50 reports respondents experience of being bullied by age. The experience of bullying tends to increase with age and plateaus after the age of 40. Proportionally more CFA staff report experiences of bullying in every age cohort than do MFB staff.

Table 50 Whether or not experienced bullying – both services by age group

While a fire service employee have you personally experienced bullying behaviour directed at you?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Yes	31.8	11.1	14.6	23.4	29.9	41.2	39.8	31.5	38.9	34.9
	No	68.2	88.9	85.4	76.6	70.1	58.8	60.2	68.5	61.1	65.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
CFA	Yes	41.2	16.7	17.3	29.0	39.4	51.7	52.3	60.0	56.7	46.2
	No	58.8	83.3	82.7	71.0	60.6	48.3	47.7	40.0	43.3	53.8
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Yes	24.9	0.0	10.0	18.2	19.7	31.1	28.6	22.2	33.7	30.0
	No	75.1	100.0	90.0	81.8	80.3	68.9	71.4	77.8	66.3	70.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.4 Duration of bullying

The time over which bullying occurs and the frequency of bullying acts are considered in some studies to be significant determinants as to whether forms of workplace aggression constitute bullying. However, whether we call shorter periods of workplace aggression ‘bullying’ or something else, it is still behaviour that undermines the psychological health and morale of those subjected to it, and so we have not sought to confine references to a defined time period. We have, however captured data on the durations of episodes of bullying behaviour reported in the survey which are presented in Tables 51 - 53.

Table 51 reports that of the personnel who stated that they had been subjected to bullying, 59.4% reported it lasted for more than 6 months. 81% of women who reported bullying said it lasted more than 6 months, compared with 57.4% of the males who had been bullied. 75% of the bullying disclosed by non-operational staff was for more than 6 months, compared with 57.4% of that reported by firefighters. 63.3% of bullying identified by MFB staff lasted more than 6 months, compared with 56.2% of recorded CFA bullying.

Tables 52 and 53 show no clear relationship between length of service or age cohort and the propensity of bullying that is experienced to be longer than 6 months.

Table 51 Duration of bullying experience – by service, role and gender

(Of those who have been bullied) over what period of time did this behavior occur?		Respondents who experienced bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	One-off event	15.3	9.5	15.9	9.4	0.0	14.3	16.1	20.0	16.0
	Over several weeks	9.3	0.0	10.1	6.3	0.0	9.5	9.6	0.0	10.1
	Less than 3 months	3.6	4.8	3.5	6.3	0.0	9.5	3.2	10.0	3.0
	3 - 6 months	12.5	4.8	13.2	3.1	9.1	0.0	13.7	0.0	14.3
	6 - 12 months	11.7	19.0	11.2	9.4	18.2	4.8	12.0	20.0	11.8
	12 - 24 months	9.6	19.0	8.9	25.0	27.3	23.8	7.6	10.0	7.6
	more than two years	38.1	42.9	37.2	40.6	45.5	38.1	37.8	40.0	37.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	One-off event	19.6	12.5	20.0	14.3	0.0	18.8	20.5	33.3	20.2
	Over several weeks	7.8	0.0	8.3	4.8	0.0	6.3	8.3	0.0	8.5
	Less than 3 months	3.9	0.0	4.1	9.5	0.0	12.5	3.0	0.0	3.1
	3 - 6 months	12.4	0.0	13.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.4	0.0	14.7
	6 - 12 months	15.0	12.5	15.2	4.8	20.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	17.1
	12 - 24 months	9.8	25.0	9.0	23.8	40.0	18.8	7.6	0.0	7.8
	more than two years	31.4	50.0	30.3	42.9	40.0	43.8	29.5	66.7	28.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	One-off event	10.2	7.7	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	14.3	11.1
	Over several weeks	10.9	0.0	12.4	9.1	0.0	20.0	11.1	0.0	12.0
	Less than 3 months	3.1	7.7	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	14.3	2.8
	3 - 6 months	12.5	7.7	13.3	9.1	16.7	0.0	12.8	0.0	13.9
	6 - 12 months	7.8	23.1	6.2	18.2	16.7	20.0	6.8	28.6	5.6
	12 - 24 months	9.4	15.4	8.8	27.3	16.7	40.0	7.7	14.3	7.4
	more than two years	46.1	38.5	46.0	36.4	50.0	20.0	47.0	28.6	47.2
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 52 Duration of bullying experience – by length of service

(Of people who experienced bullying) Is the bullying still happening?		Respondents who experienced bullying	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Yes	44.1	0.0	41.7	40.0	46.3	49.0	43.2	37.8	45.1	53.3
	No	42.7	100.0	41.7	40.0	43.9	38.8	43.2	44.4	45.1	40.0
	Other	13.2	0.0	16.7	20.0	9.8	12.2	13.5	17.8	9.8	6.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Yes	35.9	0.0	33.3	27.8	35.7	40.0	43.5	23.8	41.2	50.0
	No	47.1	100.0	55.6	44.4	50.0	46.7	39.1	47.6	47.1	50.0
	Other	17.0	0.0	11.1	27.8	14.3	13.3	17.4	28.6	11.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Yes	53.9	0.0	66.7	58.3	69.2	63.2	42.9	50.0	47.1	55.6
	No	37.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	30.8	26.3	50.0	41.7	44.1	33.3
	Other	8.6	0.0	33.3	8.3	0.0	10.5	7.1	8.3	8.8	11.1
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 53 Duration of bullying experience – by age group

(Of those who have been bullied) over what period of time did this behavior occur?		Respondents who experienced bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	One-off event	15.3	100.0	16.7	13.3	22.0	10.2	18.9	17.8	5.9	26.7
	Over several weeks	9.3	0.0	8.3	6.7	12.2	8.2	5.4	11.1	13.7	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	6.1	2.7	4.4	2.0	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.5	0.0	25.0	26.7	4.9	14.3	10.8	6.7	15.7	0.0
	6 - 12 months	11.7	0.0	8.3	23.3	17.1	4.1	8.1	13.3	5.9	26.7
	12 - 24 months	9.6	0.0	33.3	3.3	4.9	10.2	16.2	11.1	3.9	13.3
	more than two years	38.1	0.0	8.3	26.7	31.7	46.9	37.8	35.6	52.9	33.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	One-off event	19.6	100.0	22.2	22.2	28.6	16.7	21.7	14.3	0.0	33.3
	Over several weeks	7.8	0.0	11.1	5.6	17.9	3.3	8.7	9.5	0.0	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	6.7	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.4	0.0	22.2	22.2	3.6	16.7	13.0	4.8	17.6	0.0
	6 - 12 months	15.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	25.0	3.3	8.7	9.5	11.8	33.3
	12 - 24 months	9.8	0.0	22.2	0.0	3.6	6.7	13.0	19.0	11.8	16.7
	more than two years	31.4	0.0	11.1	16.7	14.3	46.7	34.8	33.3	58.8	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	One-off event	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	14.3	20.8	8.8	22.2
	Over several weeks	10.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	15.8	0.0	12.5	20.6	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	5.3	7.1	0.0	2.9	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.5	0.0	33.3	33.3	7.7	10.5	7.1	8.3	14.7	0.0
	6 - 12 months	7.8	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	5.3	7.1	16.7	2.9	22.2
	12 - 24 months	9.4	0.0	66.7	8.3	7.7	15.8	21.4	4.2	0.0	11.1
	more than two years	46.1	0.0	0.0	41.7	69.2	47.4	42.9	37.5	50.0	44.4
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.5 Is the bullying still happening?

Table 54 Persons reporting bullying whether or not it is still happening – by service, role and gender

(Of people who experienced bullying) Is the bullying still happening?		Respondents who experienced bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Yes	44.1	38.1	44.2	46.9	63.6	38.1	43.8	10.0	44.7
	No	42.7	47.6	42.6	34.4	18.2	42.9	43.8	80.0	42.6
	Other	13.2	14.3	13.2	18.8	18.2	19.0	12.4	10.0	12.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	Yes	35.9	50.0	35.2	42.9	80.0	31.3	34.8	0.0	35.7
	No	47.1	37.5	47.6	38.1	20.0	43.8	48.5	66.7	48.1
	Other	17.0	12.5	17.2	19.0	0.0	25.0	16.7	33.3	16.3
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	Yes	53.9	30.8	55.8	54.5	50.0	60.0	53.8	14.3	55.6
	No	37.5	53.8	36.3	27.3	16.7	40.0	38.5	85.7	36.1
	Other	8.6	15.4	8.0	18.2	33.3	0.0	7.7	0.0	8.3
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

According to Table 54, 44.1% of respondents who stated they had experienced bullying indicated it was still occurring at the time of the survey. 42.7% of respondents reported it was not. 13.2 % of respondents who selected 'other' typically stated that could not tell or suggested it was still happening to others. Less female experience of bullying was current (38.1%) than that experienced by males (44.2%). 63.6% of bullying experienced by non-operational females was current compared to only 10% of that reported by female firefighters. 44.7% of bullying reported by male firefighters is current. 80% of bullying reported by non-operational females in the CFA is current compared with no current bullying among female CFA firefighters. 55.6% of bullying reported by MFB male firefighters is current compared with 14.3% of bullying reported by MFB female firefighters.

Table 55 Persons reporting bullying whether or not it is still happening – by length of service

(Of people who experienced bullying) Is the bullying still happening?		Respondents who experienced bullying	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Yes	44.1	0.0	41.7	40.0	46.3	49.0	43.2	37.8	45.1	53.3
	No	42.7	100.0	41.7	40.0	43.9	38.8	43.2	44.4	45.1	40.0
	Other	13.2	0.0	16.7	20.0	9.8	12.2	13.5	17.8	9.8	6.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Yes	35.9	0.0	33.3	27.8	35.7	40.0	43.5	23.8	41.2	50.0
	No	47.1	100.0	55.6	44.4	50.0	46.7	39.1	47.6	47.1	50.0
	Other	17.0	0.0	11.1	27.8	14.3	13.3	17.4	28.6	11.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Yes	53.9	0.0	66.7	58.3	69.2	63.2	42.9	50.0	47.1	55.6
	No	37.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	30.8	26.3	50.0	41.7	44.1	33.3
	Other	8.6	0.0	33.3	8.3	0.0	10.5	7.1	8.3	8.8	11.1
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 55 shows the balance between current and non-current bullying is fairly equal across length of service cohorts, taking the both agencies as a whole, whereas viewing the agencies separately, the bullying reported in the CFA is more historical while that of the MFB is more current. There is some similarity with the current / non current bullying balance across age cohorts for the two agencies as well (Table 56).

Table 56 Persons reporting bullying whether or not it is still happening – by age category

(Of people who experienced bullying) Is the bullying still happening?		Respondents who experienced bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Yes	44.1	0.0	41.7	40.0	46.3	49.0	43.2	37.8	45.1	53.3
	No	42.7	100.0	41.7	40.0	43.9	38.8	43.2	44.4	45.1	40.0
	Other	13.2	0.0	16.7	20.0	9.8	12.2	13.5	17.8	9.8	6.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Yes	35.9	0.0	33.3	27.8	35.7	40.0	43.5	23.8	41.2	50.0
	No	47.1	100.0	55.6	44.4	50.0	46.7	39.1	47.6	47.1	50.0
	Other	17.0	0.0	11.1	27.8	14.3	13.3	17.4	28.6	11.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Yes	53.9	0.0	66.7	58.3	69.2	63.2	42.9	50.0	47.1	55.6
	No	37.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	30.8	26.3	50.0	41.7	44.1	33.3
	Other	8.6	0.0	33.3	8.3	0.0	10.5	7.1	8.3	8.8	11.1
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.6 Currently experienced bullying of longer than 6 months duration

Although what follows is not derived from a stratified random sample, and in the absence of evidence that behaviour conformed to a twice per week frequency (required to constitute bullying in some literature), we can report currently experienced bullying with a duration of more than six months for rough comparison with other studies. A few respondents specifically mentioned that their experience was sporadic and for the purposes of these tables are not included.

Table 57 Bullying currently experienced of a duration of six or more months, with cases described as being infrequently experienced excluded – by gender, role and service

Currently being bullied for more than 6 mths, declared infrequent not included.		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Yes	11.5	17.0	11.0	39.0	50.0	34.6	10.2	3.0	10.3
	No	88.5	83.0	89.0	61.0	50.0	65.4	89.8	97.0	89.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Yes	10.5	16.7	10.2	38.5	50.0	35.0	8.4	0.0	8.7
	No	89.5	83.3	89.8	61.5	50.0	65.0	91.6	100.0	91.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	2.9	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Yes	12.3	17.2	11.6	40.0	50.0	33.3	11.4	4.8	11.3
	No	87.7	82.8	88.4	60.0	50.0	66.7	88.6	95.2	88.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Non-gender specific persons not presented to avoid identification.

In the absence of data on frequency of bullying acts (eg twice per week) this is likely to be an over estimation in relation to other prevalence studies. Nevertheless, according to this data (Table 57) a larger proportion of women (17%) report current bullying than men (11%), a larger proportion of non-operational staff (39%) report current bullying than career firefighters (10.2%), and slightly more MFB staff (12.3%) report current bullying than staff of the CFA (10.5%). Female career firefighters report lower rates of current bullying (3%) than their male counterparts (10.3%).

Table 58 Bullying currently experienced of a duration of six or more months, with cases described as being infrequently experienced excluded – by length of service

Currently being bullied for more than 6 mths, declared infrequent not included.		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Yes	11.5	0.6	10.1	12.9	19.1	22.1	35.0	9.6	6.4	23.3
	No	88.5	99.4	89.9	87.1	80.9	77.9	65.0	90.4	93.6	76.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
CFA	Yes	10.5	0.0	4.1	7.0	6.6	21.7	35.3	25.0	31.8	12.5
	No	89.5	100.0	95.9	93.0	93.4	78.3	64.7	75.0	68.2	87.5
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Yes	12.3	0.0	2.2	10.0	18.4	38.7	233.3	8.1	17.2	11.4
	No	87.7	100.0	97.8	90.0	81.6	61.3	-133.3	91.9	82.8	88.6
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 58 shows respondents reporting to be currently experiencing bullying for six months or more are marginally more likely to have longer length of service overall, but more decidedly so in the CFA.

Table 59 presents the data by age: those currently experiencing bullying are more likely to be over 40 years of age overall, and this effect is particularly pronounced in the CFA.

Table 59 Bullying currently experienced of a duration of six or more months, with cases described as being infrequently experienced excluded – by age category

Currently being bullied for more than 6 mths, declared infrequent not included.		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Yes	11.5	0.0	4.9	6.3	9.5	18.5	14.0	10.5	16.8	11.6
	No	88.5	100.0	95.1	93.8	90.5	81.5	86.0	89.5	83.2	88.4
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
CFA	Yes	10.5	0.0	3.8	4.8	5.6	17.2	13.6	17.1	23.3	7.7
	No	89.5	100.0	96.2	95.2	94.4	82.8	86.4	82.9	76.7	92.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Yes	12.3	0.0	6.7	7.6	13.6	19.7	14.3	8.3	14.9	13.3
	No	87.7	100.0	93.3	92.4	86.4	80.3	85.7	91.7	85.1	86.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.7 Characteristics of bullying

4.7.1 Bullying and other workplace aggression individually or as one of a group

The 281 respondents who reported experience of being bullied during their careers with their present employer were then asked a set of questions to elicit some characteristics of the bullying they experienced. They were first asked:

16. Were you bullied individually or as one of a group?

- As an individual
- As one of a group
- On different occasions both as an individual and as a member of a group
- Other _____

According to Table 60, among the 281 staff reporting experience of bullying at any stage in their career, 38.8% of these were bullied as individuals, 29.2% as one of a group, 31.7% were bullied on different occasions as both. More were bullied as individuals in the CFA (42.5%) than in the MFB (34.4%), while 40.6% of MFB staff were bullied as a group compared to 19.6% of CFA bullied staff. Bullied females were more likely to experience this as individuals than males (47.6% vs 38.4%), less likely as one of a group (9.5% vs 30.6%) and more likely on both an individual and group basis (42.9% vs 30.6%). Bullied non-operational staff experienced this more as individuals (46.9%), or as both individuals and in a group (43.8%) than only as part of a group (9.4%). Female firefighters reporting experience of bullying say they did so more as individuals (60%) than as part of a group (10%), whereas males did so more equally (37.1% individual, 32.5% group, 30% both).

Table 60 Whether bullied as individual / group / both – by organisation, gender and role

(Of the people who were bullied) Were you bullied individually or as one of a group?		All respondents who were bullied	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	As an individual	38.8	47.6	38.4	46.9	36.4	52.4	37.8	60.0	37.1
	As one of a group	29.2	9.5	30.6	9.4	9.1	9.5	31.7	10.0	32.5
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	31.7	42.9	30.6	43.8	54.5	38.1	30.1	30.0	30.0
	Other	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	As an individual	42.5	50.0	42.1	47.6	40.0	50.0	41.7	66.7	41.1
	As one of a group	19.6	12.5	20.0	14.3	20.0	12.5	20.5	0.0	20.9
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	37.3	37.5	37.2	38.1	40.0	37.5	37.1	33.3	37.2
	Other	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	As an individual	34.4	46.2	33.6	45.5	33.3	60.0	33.3	57.1	32.4
	As one of a group	40.6	7.7	44.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	14.3	46.3
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	25.0	46.2	22.1	54.5	66.7	40.0	22.2	28.6	21.3
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 61 Whether bullied as individual / group / both – by length of service

(Of the people who were bullied) Were you bullied individually or as one of a group?		All respondents who were bullied	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	As an individual	38.8	50.0	25.0	37.9	37.7	37.2	35.3	43.6	44.8	42.1
	As one of a group	29.2	31.3	50.0	44.8	24.6	20.9	11.8	28.2	24.1	31.6
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	31.7	18.8	25.0	17.2	37.7	41.9	47.1	28.2	31.0	26.3
	Other	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.7	10.0	10.3	21.7	15.3	6.0	13.9	10.3	6.8
CFA	As an individual	42.5	46.2	38.5	30.8	42.5	37.5	40.0	64.3	28.6	66.7
	As one of a group	19.6	30.8	23.1	30.8	20.0	21.9	6.7	7.1	28.6	0.0
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	37.3	23.1	38.5	38.5	37.5	40.6	46.7	28.6	42.9	33.3
	Other	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	26.1	20.9	9.8	9.2	4.6	3.9
MFB	As an individual	34.4	66.7	13.3	43.8	28.6	36.4	0.0	32.0	50.0	30.8
	As one of a group	40.6	33.3	73.3	56.3	33.3	18.2	50.0	40.0	22.7	46.2
	On different occasions both as an individual and one of a group	25.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	38.1	45.5	50.0	28.0	27.3	23.1
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	2.3	11.7	12.5	16.4	8.6	1.6	19.5	17.2	10.2

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Tables 61 and 62 add little more to the picture in that the tendency to be bullied individually or more collectively does not seem related in any consistent way to either length of service or age.

Table 62 Whether bullied as individual / group / both – by age group

(Of those who have been bullied) over what period of time did this behavior occur?		Respondents who experienced bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	One-off event	15.3	100.0	16.7	13.3	22.0	10.2	18.9	17.8	5.9	26.7
	Over several weeks	9.3	0.0	8.3	6.7	12.2	8.2	5.4	11.1	13.7	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	6.1	2.7	4.4	2.0	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.5	0.0	25.0	26.7	4.9	14.3	10.8	6.7	15.7	0.0
	6 - 12 months	11.7	0.0	8.3	23.3	17.1	4.1	8.1	13.3	5.9	26.7
	12 - 24 months	9.6	0.0	33.3	3.3	4.9	10.2	16.2	11.1	3.9	13.3
	more than two years	38.1	0.0	8.3	26.7	31.7	46.9	37.8	35.6	52.9	33.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	One-off event	19.6	100.0	22.2	22.2	28.6	16.7	21.7	14.3	0.0	33.3
	Over several weeks	7.8	0.0	11.1	5.6	17.9	3.3	8.7	9.5	0.0	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	6.7	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.4	0.0	22.2	22.2	3.6	16.7	13.0	4.8	17.6	0.0
	6 - 12 months	15.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	25.0	3.3	8.7	9.5	11.8	33.3
	12 - 24 months	9.8	0.0	22.2	0.0	3.6	6.7	13.0	19.0	11.8	16.7
	more than two years	31.4	0.0	11.1	16.7	14.3	46.7	34.8	33.3	58.8	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	One-off event	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	14.3	20.8	8.8	22.2
	Over several weeks	10.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	15.8	0.0	12.5	20.6	0.0
	Less than 3 months	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	5.3	7.1	0.0	2.9	0.0
	3 - 6 months	12.5	0.0	33.3	33.3	7.7	10.5	7.1	8.3	14.7	0.0
	6 - 12 months	7.8	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	5.3	7.1	16.7	2.9	22.2
	12 - 24 months	9.4	0.0	66.7	8.3	7.7	15.8	21.4	4.2	0.0	11.1
	more than two years	46.1	0.0	0.0	41.7	69.2	47.4	42.9	37.5	50.0	44.4
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 63 reports on 102 people currently experiencing bullying of at least six months duration, which more closely conforms to some definitions applied in the literature. Here we see a far stronger tendency for those currently experiencing bullying to do so as part of a group than as an individual, particularly with relation to MFB firefighters.

Table 63 Currently bullied six or more months – whether bullied individually or as a group or both, by service, gender and role

Of 102 people currently bullied for 6mths +: Were you bullied individually or as one of a group?		Currently bullied 6 mths+	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	As an individual	10.8	0.0	12.0	12.5	0.0	22.2	10.5	0.0	10.8
	As one of a group	47.1	25.0	48.9	6.3	14.3	0.0	54.7	100.0	54.2
	On different occasions both as an individual and as a member of a group	41.2	75.0	38.0	81.3	85.7	77.8	33.7	0.0	33.7
	Other	1.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2
	Total as % of sample cohort	100.0	7.8	90.2	15.7	43.8	56.3	84.3	1.2	96.5
CFA	As an individual	15.4	0.0	16.7	10.0	0.0	14.3	17.2	0.0	17.2
	As one of a group	17.9	33.3	16.7	10.0	33.3	0.0	20.7	0.0	20.7
	On different occasions both as an individual and as a member of a group	64.1	66.7	63.9	80.0	66.7	85.7	58.6	0.0	58.6
	Other	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Total as % of sample cohort	38.2	7.7	92.3	25.6	30.0	70.0	74.4	0.0	100.0
MFB	As an individual	7.9	0.0	8.9	16.7	0.0	50.0	7.0	0.0	7.4
	As one of a group	65.1	20.0	69.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.9	100.0	72.2
	On different occasions both as an individual and as a member of a group	27.0	80.0	21.4	83.3	100.0	50.0	21.1	0.0	20.4
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total as % of sample cohort	61.8	7.9	88.9	9.5	66.7	33.3	90.5	1.8	94.7

Note: Sample comprised 102 staff who reported currently being bullied for at least 6 months (8 females, 92 males, 2 non-gender specific).

4.7.2 Primary perpetrators of bullying experienced

What was the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying you experienced? (Mark only one oval.)

- Person of a lower rank
- A co-worker
- Volunteer
- An immediate supervisor
- Senior manager / executive
- Other

Table 64a reveals that overall, respondents cite senior managers / executives (38.1%), immediate supervisors (19.2%) and volunteers (17.1%) to be the principle perpetrators of the bullying they have experienced during their careers with their present fire service. For CFA staff, volunteers are the principal offenders (28.1%), followed by immediate supervisors (23.5%) and senior managers / executives (22.2%). For MFB staff, Senior managers / executives are by far the most cited perpetrators (57%) followed by a co-worker (15.6%) and immediate supervisor (14.1%).

Female staff also cite senior managers / executives (33.3%), immediate supervisors (28.6%) as the main sources of bullying they have experienced, with co-workers (23.8%) displacing volunteers as the third most common category of person bullying them. Males place senior management / executives at the top of their list of perpetrators (38.4%) with immediate supervisors and volunteers sharing second place (18.6%).

Non-operational staff cite senior management (males-47.6%, females 45.5%) as principal offenders, with 27.3% of females listing immediate supervisors and 'other' as secondary sources. Co-workers are the principal source (50%) of bullying for the 10 female career firefighters who have been bullied, followed by their immediate supervisor (30%) and senior managers / executives

(20%). Of the 237 male career firefighters who report bullying, 37.6% nominate senior managers / executives the principal perpetrators, followed by volunteers (19.4%), immediate supervisors (19%), a co-worker (11.8%) and 'other' (11.4%).

Table 64a Status of main bullying perpetrator – by service, gender and role

(Of those who were bullied) What was the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying you experienced?		All respondents experiencing bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Person of a lower rank	1.1	0.0	1.2	3.1	0.0	4.8	0.8	0.0	0.8
	A co-worker	13.2	23.8	12.0	9.4	0.0	14.3	13.7	50.0	11.8
	Volunteer	17.1	0.0	18.6	6.3	0.0	9.5	18.5	0.0	19.4
	An immediate supervisor	19.2	28.6	18.6	18.8	27.3	14.3	19.3	30.0	19.0
	Senior Manager / executive	38.1	33.3	38.4	46.9	45.5	47.6	36.9	20.0	37.6
	Other	11.4	14.3	11.2	15.6	27.3	9.5	10.8	0.0	11.4
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	Person of a lower rank	1.3	0.0	1.4	4.8	0.0	6.3	0.8	0.0	0.8
	A co-worker	11.1	25.0	10.3	14.3	0.0	18.8	10.6	66.7	9.3
	Volunteer	28.1	0.0	29.7	9.5	0.0	12.5	31.1	0.0	31.8
	An immediate supervisor	23.5	12.5	24.1	14.3	20.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	25.6
	Senior Manager / executive	22.2	37.5	21.4	38.1	40.0	37.5	19.7	33.3	19.4
	Other	13.7	25.0	13.1	19.0	40.0	12.5	12.9	0.0	13.2
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	Person of a lower rank	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	A co-worker	15.6	23.1	14.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.1	42.9	14.8
	Volunteer	3.9	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.6
	An immediate supervisor	14.1	38.5	11.5	27.3	33.3	20.0	12.8	42.9	11.1
	Senior Manager / executive	57.0	30.8	60.2	63.6	50.0	80.0	56.4	14.3	59.3
	Other	8.6	7.7	8.8	9.1	16.7	0.0	8.5	0.0	9.3
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

The composition of the 'other' category is explored in table 64b, which respondents largely used to list combinations of personnel. Here 32 respondents listed 54 perpetrators, that include senior management (14.8%), the public (14.8%), volunteers (13%), the boards of the fire services and the VFBV (each 9.3%) and the media (7.4%).

Table 65 reports the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying behaviour by length of service. Overall, senior management / executive are cited as the main perpetrators in all length of service categories but for the 0-3 years group who report volunteers to be their chief offenders. Immediate supervisors and volunteers appear to be less of an issue for MFB respondents than they are for CFA respondents, across most length of service cohorts, whereas senior managers / executives are more frequently cited as perpetrators.

Table 66 shows that volunteers are less commonly reported as perpetrators of bullying in the CFA, while senior managers are more commonly reported with the increasing age of respondents. Senior management are consistently reported across MFB age cohorts as main perpetrators.

Table 64b Status of main bullying perpetrator – ‘Other’ category by service, gender and role.

54 'Other' perpetrators nominated by 32 respondents (multiple entries)		All respondents experiencing bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	VFBV	9.3	0.0	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	11.1
	Senior management	14.8	20.0	14.3	11.1	20.0	0.0	15.6	0.0	15.6
	Public	14.8	0.0	16.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.8	0.0	17.8
	Media	7.4	0.0	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9	0.0	8.9
	Volunteer	13.0	20.0	12.2	22.2	20.0	25.0	11.1	0.0	11.1
	Career firefighters	1.9	20.0	0.0	11.1	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	9.3	0.0	10.2	11.1	0.0	25.0	8.9	0.0	8.9
	MFB Board / Executive	9.3	0.0	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	11.1
	Politicians	3.7	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	4.4
	Co-worker	3.7	20.0	2.0	11.1	20.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.2
	Liberal Party	1.9	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.2
	Lower rank	1.9	0.0	2.0	11.1	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Immediate supervisor	1.9	0.0	2.0	11.1	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	7.4	20.0	6.1	11.1	20.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
cohort as % of total		100.0	9.3	90.7	16.7	55.6	44.4	83.3	0.0	100.0
CFA	VFBV	13.5	0.0	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7
	Senior management	13.5	0.0	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7
	Public	16.2	0.0	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
	Media	2.7	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
	Volunteer	18.9	33.3	17.6	28.6	33.3	25.0	16.7	0.0	16.7
	Career firefighters	2.7	33.3	0.0	14.3	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	13.5	0.0	14.7	14.3	0.0	25.0	13.3	0.0	13.3
	MFB Board / Executive	2.7	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
	Politicians	2.7	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
	Co-worker	2.7	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
	Liberal Party	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Lower rank	2.7	0.0	2.9	14.3	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Immediate supervisor	2.7	0.0	2.9	14.3	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	5.4	33.3	2.9	14.3	33.3	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3
cohort as % of total		68.5	8.1	91.9	18.9	42.9	57.1	81.1	0.0	100.0
MFB	VFBV	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Senior management	17.6	50.0	13.3	50.0	50.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	13.3
	Public	11.8	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	13.3
	Media	17.6	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
	Volunteer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Career firefighters	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	MFB Board / Executive	23.5	0.0	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	0.0	26.7
	Politicians	5.9	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
	Co-worker	5.9	50.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Liberal Party	5.9	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
	Lower rank	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Immediate supervisor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	11.8	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	13.3
cohort as % of total		31.5	11.8	88.2	11.8	100.0	0.0	88.2	0.0	100.0

Note: Sample comprised 32 (3 females, 29 males). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 65 Status of main bullying perpetrator- by respondent length of service

(Of those who were bullied) What was the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying you experienced?		All respondents experiencing bullying	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Person of a lower rank	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.3	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
	A co-worker	13.2	18.8	14.3	10.3	16.4	18.6	5.9	5.1	10.3	15.8
	Volunteer	17.1	62.5	10.7	13.8	24.6	14.0	17.6	10.3	6.9	5.3
	An immediate supervisor	19.2	12.5	21.4	13.8	18.0	16.3	17.6	38.5	10.3	15.8
	Senior Manager / executive	38.1	6.3	46.4	44.8	26.2	39.5	35.3	38.5	55.2	52.6
	Other	11.4	0.0	7.1	17.2	13.1	9.3	23.5	7.7	13.8	10.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.7	10.0	10.3	21.7	15.3	6.0	13.9	10.3	6.8
CFA	Person of a lower rank	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	A co-worker	11.1	15.4	15.4	0.0	10.0	15.6	6.7	0.0	14.3	33.3
	Volunteer	28.1	69.2	23.1	23.1	35.0	18.8	20.0	21.4	28.6	0.0
	An immediate supervisor	23.5	15.4	30.8	15.4	22.5	15.6	20.0	57.1	14.3	33.3
	Senior Manager / executive	22.2	0.0	23.1	23.1	15.0	37.5	26.7	14.3	42.9	16.7
	Other	13.7	0.0	7.7	38.5	15.0	9.4	26.7	7.1	0.0	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	26.1	20.9	9.8	9.2	4.6	3.9
MFB	Person of a lower rank	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
	A co-worker	15.6	33.3	13.3	18.8	28.6	27.3	0.0	8.0	9.1	7.7
	Volunteer	3.9	33.3	0.0	6.3	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	7.7
	An immediate supervisor	14.1	0.0	13.3	12.5	9.5	18.2	0.0	28.0	9.1	7.7
	Senior Manager / executive	57.0	33.3	66.7	62.5	47.6	45.5	100.0	52.0	59.1	69.2
	Other	8.6	0.0	6.7	0.0	9.5	9.1	0.0	8.0	18.2	7.7
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	2.3	11.7	12.5	16.4	8.6	1.6	19.5	17.2	10.2

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 66 Status of main bullying perpetrator- by respondent age group

(Of those who were bullied) What was the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying you experienced?		All respondents experiencing bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Person of a lower rank	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0
	A co-worker	13.2	0.0	8.3	23.3	14.6	10.2	10.8	11.1	13.7	13.3
	Volunteer	17.1	0.0	41.7	30.0	26.8	18.4	21.6	4.4	5.9	6.7
	An immediate supervisor	19.2	100.0	0.0	13.3	22.0	20.4	18.9	22.2	19.6	20.0
	Senior Manager / executive	38.1	0.0	33.3	26.7	31.7	32.7	37.8	46.7	45.1	53.3
	Other	11.4	0.0	16.7	6.7	4.9	16.3	10.8	15.6	11.8	6.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Person of a lower rank	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0
	A co-worker	11.1	0.0	11.1	11.1	10.7	10.0	8.7	4.8	23.5	16.7
	Volunteer	28.1	0.0	55.6	44.4	39.3	23.3	34.8	9.5	11.8	0.0
	An immediate supervisor	23.5	100.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	30.0	13.0	38.1	17.6	33.3
	Senior Manager / executive	22.2	0.0	11.1	16.7	17.9	10.0	34.8	28.6	35.3	33.3
	Other	13.7	0.0	22.2	11.1	7.1	23.3	8.7	19.0	5.9	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Person of a lower rank	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0
	A co-worker	15.6	0.0	0.0	41.7	23.1	10.5	14.3	16.7	8.8	11.1
	Volunteer	3.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.0	2.9	11.1
	An immediate supervisor	14.1	0.0	0.0	8.3	15.4	5.3	28.6	8.3	20.6	11.1
	Senior Manager / executive	57.0	0.0	100.0	41.7	61.5	68.4	42.9	62.5	50.0	66.7
	Other	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	14.3	12.5	14.7	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.7.3 Perpetrators of current bullying which has occurred for 6 months or more

Table 67a presents data on the perpetrators of workplace aggression according to survey respondents who say they are currently experiencing bullying which has lasted six months or more. Table 67b provides a breakdown of what was recorded under 'other', whereby some 20 respondents entered multiple combinations of perpetrators that we have disaggregated. 79.4% of MFB respondents report that senior management /executives are the principal perpetrators of the bullying they were experiencing for more than six months at the time they completed the survey. This comprised 60% of female MFB respondents currently being bullied and 82.1% of MFB males currently experiencing bullying. MFB respondents made up 61.8% of respondents currently experiencing bullying. CFA staff comprised 38.2 % of respondents reporting current bullying, 28.2% of whom cited senior management as primarily responsible, 15.4% an immediate supervisor and 10.3% a volunteer.

Table 67a Currently bullied six or more months
– Status of main perpetrator, by service, gender and role

Currently bullied 6 mths or more: What was the status of the main perpetrator of the bullying you experienced?		All respondents	females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Person of a lower rank	1.0	0.0	1.1	6.3	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	A co-worker	5.9	0.0	5.4	6.3	0.0	11.1	5.8	0.0	4.8
	Volunteer	4.9	0.0	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	6.0
	An immediate supervisor	8.8	12.5	8.7	18.8	14.3	22.2	7.0	0.0	7.2
	Senior Manager / executive	59.8	50.0	60.9	37.5	42.9	33.3	64.0	100.0	63.9
	Other	19.6	37.5	18.5	31.3	42.9	22.2	17.4	0.0	18.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.8	90.2	15.7	43.8	56.3	84.3	1.2	96.5
CFA	Person of a lower rank	2.6	0.0	2.8	10.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	A co-worker	7.7	0.0	8.3	10.0	0.0	14.3	6.9	0.0	6.9
	Volunteer	10.3	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8	0.0	13.8
	An immediate supervisor	15.4	0.0	16.7	10.0	0.0	14.3	17.2	0.0	17.2
	Senior Manager / executive	28.2	33.3	27.8	30.0	33.3	28.6	27.6	0.0	27.6
	Other	35.9	66.7	33.3	40.0	66.7	28.6	34.5	0.0	34.5
	Cohort as % of total	38.2	7.7	92.3	25.6	30.0	70.0	74.4	0.0	100.0
MFB	Person of a lower rank	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	A co-worker	4.8	0.0	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	3.7
	Volunteer	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.9
	An immediate supervisor	4.8	20.0	3.6	33.3	25.0	50.0	1.8	0.0	1.9
	Senior Manager / executive	79.4	60.0	82.1	50.0	50.0	50.0	82.5	100.0	83.3
	Other	9.5	20.0	8.9	16.7	25.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	9.3
	Cohort as % of total	61.8	7.9	88.9	9.5	66.7	33.3	90.5	1.8	94.7

Note: Sample comprised 102 staff who reported being currently bullied for more than 6 months (8 females, 92 males, 2 non-gender specific).

The 35.6% of responding CFA staff who selected 'Other' (Table 67b) spread the responsibility for bullying they currently experienced on multiple perpetrators, laying 26.2% of the responsibility on senior management, 21.9% on volunteers and 12.9% on the VFBV. Female career firefighters report only current bullying by MFB senior management, whereas non-operational females are currently experiencing bullying by immediate supervisors, senior executives (Table 131) and by volunteers, co-workers, career firefighters, and immediate supervisors (table 131b).

Table 67b Currently bullied six or more months – Status of main perpetrator, by service, gender and role – Details of ‘Other’

Currently bullied 6+ months "Other" persecutors breakdown (multiple entries)		All respondents	Females	Males	Non- operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Senior management	26.2	22.2	27.3	23.1	22.2	25.0	27.6	0.0	27.6
	Public	2.4	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Media	2.4	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Volunteer	19.0	22.2	18.2	23.1	22.2	25.0	17.2	0.0	17.2
	Career firefighters	2.4	11.1	0.0	7.7	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	4.8	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	6.9
	MFB Board / Executive	4.8	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	6.9
	Politicians	2.4	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Co-worker	9.5	22.2	6.1	15.4	22.2	0.0	6.9	0.0	6.9
	Liberal Party	2.4	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Lower rank	7.1	11.1	6.1	15.4	11.1	25.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	Immediate supervisor	7.1	11.1	6.1	15.4	11.1	25.0	3.4	0.0	3.4
	VFBV	9.5	0.0	12.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.8	0.0	13.8
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of total 'other'		100.0	21.4	78.6	31.0	69.2	30.8	69.0	0.0	100.0
CFA	Senior management	21.9	14.3	24.0	18.2	14.3	25.0	23.8	0.0	23.8
	Public	3.1	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	4.8
	Media	3.1	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	4.8
	Volunteer	21.9	28.6	20.0	27.3	28.6	25.0	19.0	0.0	19.0
	Career firefighters	3.1	14.3	0.0	9.1	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	6.3	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.0	9.5
	MFB Board / Executive	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Politicians	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Co-worker	9.4	14.3	8.0	9.1	14.3	0.0	9.5	0.0	9.5
	Liberal Party	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Lower rank	9.4	14.3	8.0	18.2	14.3	25.0	4.8	0.0	4.8
	Immediate supervisor	9.4	14.3	8.0	18.2	14.3	25.0	4.8	0.0	4.8
	VFBV	12.5	0.0	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.0	0.0	19.0
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of total 'other'		76.2	21.9	78.1	34.4	63.6	36.4	65.6	0.0	100.0
MFB	Senior management	40.0	50.0	37.5	50.0	50.0	0.0	37.5	0.0	37.5
	Public	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Media	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Volunteer	10.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5
	Career firefighters	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	CFA Board / executive	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	MFB Board / Executive	20.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0
	Politicians	10.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5
	Co-worker	10.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Liberal Party	10.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5
	Lower rank	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Immediate supervisor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	VFBV	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of total 'other'		23.8	20.0	80.0	20.0	100.0	0.0	80.0	0.0	100.0

Note: References to 40 perpetrators by 20 respondents (Other category permitted multiple entries).

4.7.4 Why they were targeted

Respondents who reported they had experienced bullying at some stage in their career with their present employer were asked ‘to the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?’ The questionnaire solicited a free text response. Respondents sometimes listed multiple reasons, so each element was coded accordingly.

Some replies were couched in unclear language or went into detail as to what happened to them, without actually offering a reason as to why they think it happened. These are classed as ‘reasons unclear’ whereas those who respond that they did not know why they were targeted are coded ‘don’t know’.

Table 68 presents their responses in order of frequency of occurrence. Responses that related to industrial conflict and the related campaign of vilification directed at career firefighters by volunteers occupy four of the top five reasons nominated by respondents cited as the reason for the aggression / bullying they had experienced, particularly those nominated by males.

Being a union member was cited more often than gender (18.2% vs 9.1%) as the reason non-operational female respondents who reported bullying thought they were targeted, whereas 20% of career firefighter women who experienced bullying nominated gender equal highest cause with the perpetrator's intemperate behaviour/personality. Industrial conflict is the primary cause for all males to be targeted for bullying in their opinion, according to 20% of non-operational males and 23.1% of career firefighters.

Table 69 presents the same data for CFA staff, using the same ordering of reasons as provided in table 68. The largest number of staff ascribe their bullying to the industrial tactics of their employer and for being union members. The fourth highest reason CFA staff feel targeted is because of volunteer resentment (7.8%) whereas volunteers are not mentioned by MFB staff (Table 70). 2.6% of CFA respondents (all male career firefighters) say they were targeted for their lack of support for the union, whereas this is not reported as an issue for MFB personnel

Table 68 Respondents belief as to why they were targeted
- both services by gender and role

(Of those who were bullied) To the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?	All Staff	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by management	22.1	9.5	22.9	16.1	9.1	20.0	22.8	10.0	23.1
For being a union member	19.6	9.5	20.5	12.9	18.2	10.0	20.4	0.0	21.4
For being a career firefighter	7.8	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	9.2
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	5.0	4.8	5.0	6.5	0.0	10.0	4.8	10.0	4.6
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	4.3	0.0	4.7	3.2	0.0	5.0	4.4	0.0	4.6
Reasons unclear (not discernible)	3.9	14.3	3.1	9.7	27.3	0.0	3.2	0.0	3.4
Personal rivalry	3.6	0.0	3.9	3.2	0.0	5.0	3.6	0.0	3.8
Difference of opinion	3.6	0.0	3.9	6.5	0.0	10.0	3.2	0.0	3.4
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	3.6	4.8	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	10.0	3.8
Don't know	2.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.9
Personality clash	2.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.9
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	2.1	4.8	1.9	6.5	0.0	10.0	1.6	10.0	1.3
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	1.8	4.8	1.6	3.2	9.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.7
Questioning bad authority	1.8	0.0	1.9	3.2	0.0	5.0	1.6	0.0	1.7
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	1.8	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.1
Female / Gender discrimination	1.1	14.3	0.0	3.2	9.1	0.0	0.8	20.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	1.4	0.0	1.6	3.2	0.0	5.0	1.2	0.0	1.3
Intemperant, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	1.4	9.5	0.8	6.5	0.0	10.0	0.8	20.0	0.0
Not supportive of the union	1.4	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.7
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	1.4	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.3
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.7	4.8	0.4	3.2	9.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
For acting according to conscience	0.7	4.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	10.0	0.4
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	0.7	0.0	0.8	6.5	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
For standing up to a bully	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Pregnancy	0.4	4.8	0.0	3.2	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.4	4.8	0.0	3.2	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Sexual harassment	0.4	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	10.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.0	3.9	7.1	89.0	3.6	84.7

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 69 Respondents belief as to why they were targeted - CFA by gender and role

(Of those who were bullied) To the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?	CFA respondents	CFA females	CFA Males	CFA non-operational staff	CFA Non Operational females	CFA Non Operational males	CFA Career firefighters	CFA Career firefighter females	CFA Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by management	17.6	12.5	17.9	20.0	20.0	20.0	17.3	0.0	17.7
For being a union member	15.7	0.0	16.6	5.0	0.0	6.7	17.3	0.0	17.7
For being a career firefighter	11.1	0.0	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.8	0.0	13.1
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	5.9	0.0	6.2	10.0	0.0	13.3	5.3	0.0	5.4
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	7.8	0.0	8.3	5.0	0.0	6.7	8.3	0.0	8.5
Reasons unclear (not discernible)	3.9	37.5	2.1	15.0	60.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	2.3
Personal rivalry	3.9	0.0	4.1	5.0	0.0	6.7	3.8	0.0	3.8
Difference of opinion	3.9	0.0	4.1	5.0	0.0	6.7	3.8	0.0	3.8
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	3.9	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	4.6
Don't know	3.3	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.8
Personality clash	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.1
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	1.3	12.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	33.3	0.8
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Questioning bad authority	2.6	0.0	2.8	5.0	0.0	6.7	2.3	0.0	2.3
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.1
Female / Gender discrimination	0.7	12.5	0.0	5.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	1.3	0.0	1.4	5.0	0.0	6.7	0.8	0.0	0.8
Intemperant, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	2.0	12.5	1.4	10.0	0.0	13.3	0.8	33.3	0.0
Not supportive of the union	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.1
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
For acting according to conscience	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	1.3	0.0	1.4	10.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.5
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.5
For standing up to a bully	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sexual harassment	0.7	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	33.3	0.0
Not joining their group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.2	94.8	13.1	25.0	75.0	86.9	2.3	97.7

Note: sample comprised 153 CFA staff who reported being bullied (8 females, 145 males). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 70 reports that 18.2% of MFB non-operational males consider they were targeted due to a personal characteristic (race/disability/physical characteristics) while this is the reason offered by only 1.9% of MFB career firefighters. 28.6% of MFB female career firefighters believe they were targeted due to being female whereas this is not mentioned by non-operational females but 33.3% cite being a union member was the reason.

Table 70 Respondents belief as to why they were targeted - MFB by gender and role

(Of those who were bullied) To the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?	MFB respondents	MFB females	MFB Males	MFB non-operational staff	MFB Non Operational females	MFB Non Operational males	MFB Career firefighters	MFB Career firefighter females	MFB Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by management	27.3	7.7	29.2	9.1	0.0	20.0	29.1	14.3	29.6
For being a union member	24.2	15.4	25.7	27.3	33.3	20.0	23.9	0.0	25.9
For being a career firefighter	3.9	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.6
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	3.9	7.7	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	14.3	3.7
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reasons unclear (not discernible)	3.9	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.6
Personal rivalry	3.1	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.7
Difference of opinion	3.1	0.0	3.5	9.1	0.0	20.0	2.6	0.0	2.8
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	3.1	7.7	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	14.3	2.8
Don't know	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
Personality clash	2.3	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.8
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	3.1	0.0	3.5	18.2	0.0	40.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	3.1	7.7	2.7	9.1	16.7	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.8
Questioning bad authority	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Female / Gender discrimination	1.6	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	28.6	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
Intemperant, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	0.8	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	14.3	0.0
Not supportive of the union	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	3.1	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	2.8
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.8	7.7	0.0	9.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For acting according to conscience	1.6	7.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	14.3	0.9
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overly strident authoritarian command	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For standing up to a bully	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	0.8	7.7	0.0	9.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.8	7.7	0.0	9.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Sexual harassment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 128 MFB staff who reported being bullied (13 females, 113 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 71 presents the reasons respondents who have experienced bullying believe they were targeted by length of service. The largest cohort of respondents have 10-15 years of service (21.7%) while the smallest are those with 0-3 years of service (5.7%). Bullying as an industrial relations tactic, because a person is a union member, and because they are a career firefighter are the most frequently offered reasons for the bullying staff experience across all length of service cohorts.

Table 71 Respondents belief as to why they were targeted – both services by length of service

(Of those who were bullied) To the best of your knowledge, why were you targeted?	Staff who were bullied	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
As an industrial relations tactic by management	22.1	18.8	39.3	44.8	19.7	11.6	5.9	17.9	17.2	26.3
For being a union member	19.6	25.0	14.3	10.3	16.4	20.9	35.3	23.1	20.7	21.1
For being a career firefighter	7.8	18.8	10.7	6.9	11.5	4.7	5.9	2.6	6.9	5.3
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	5.0	0.0	3.6	6.9	9.8	4.7	0.0	5.1	3.4	0.0
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	4.3	0.0	0.0	3.4	9.8	4.7	11.8	2.6	0.0	0.0
Reasons unclear (not discernible)	3.9	0.0	0.0	3.4	3.3	9.3	5.9	5.1	3.4	0.0
Personal rivalry	3.6	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	5.1	13.8	0.0
Difference of opinion	3.6	6.3	3.6	6.9	3.3	2.3	0.0	2.6	6.9	0.0
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	3.6	0.0	7.1	0.0	3.3	2.3	0.0	7.7	6.9	0.0
Don't know	2.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	3.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	3.4	5.3
Personality clash	2.5	6.3	7.1	3.4	3.3	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	2.1	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	5.9	0.0	0.0	5.3
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.6	3.4	10.5
Questioning bad authority	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.3	5.9	2.6	3.4	0.0
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	1.8	0.0	3.6	0.0	0.0	2.3	5.9	2.6	0.0	5.3
Female / Gender discrimination	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	1.4	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	2.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Intemperate, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	1.4	0.0	3.6	0.0	1.6	2.3	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supportive of the union	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	5.9	0.0	3.4	5.3
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.4	1.6	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
For acting according to conscience	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For standing up to a bully	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	0.4	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
Sexual harassment	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.7	10.0	10.3	21.7	15.3	6.0	13.9	10.3	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 72 reports the reasons for their being targeted by respondents who are currently experiencing bullying that has persisted for six months or more. Overall, bullying is mostly reported to be motivated as an industrial relations tactic, directed at the respondent because they are a unionist,

and because they are a career firefighter. Of the very small cohort of female career firefighters reporting to be currently experiencing bullying, the reasons for being targeted are their employer's industrial tactics and for being a career firefighter. The non-operational female fire service members (another small cohort) emphasise gender discrimination as the main reason they are targeted, along with a range of other factors including a macho culture, being a union member, not supporting the union, and a health issue. Career firefighter males cite their employer's industrial tactics, union membership and being career firefighters as the principle reasons for being targeted for bullying. Non-operational males also cite their employer's industrial relations tactics along with other forms of workplace / professional aggression.

Table 72 **Currently** **bullied** **six** **or** **more** **months**
– why they were targeted, by gender and role

Currently bullied for 6 months +: to the best of your knowledge why were you targeted?	Respondents bullied 6 mths +	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by employer / management	22.1	6.7	23.6	9.1	0.0	22.2	24.1	50.0	23.7
For being a union member	25.8	6.7	28.5	9.1	7.7	11.1	28.4	0.0	29.6
For being a career firefighter	20.9	6.7	22.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.1	50.0	24.4
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	0.6	0.0	0.7	4.5	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	1.2	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
Reasons unclear (not discernible from survey response)	1.2	6.7	0.7	4.5	7.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Personal rivalry	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Difference of opinion	0.6	0.0	0.7	4.5	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Personality clash	1.2	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	1.2	6.7	0.7	4.5	7.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	1.2	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
Questioning bad authority	3.7	6.7	3.5	4.5	7.7	0.0	3.5	0.0	3.7
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Female / Gender discrimination	2.5	26.7	0.0	18.2	30.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Intemperant, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supportive of the union	1.2	6.7	0.7	4.5	7.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	1.8	6.7	0.7	4.5	7.7	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.7
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.6	6.7	0.0	4.5	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For acting according to conscience	1.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.2
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	2.5	6.7	1.4	9.1	7.7	11.1	1.4	0.0	0.7
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	0.6	0.0	0.7	4.5	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	3.7	0.0	3.5	4.5	0.0	11.1	3.5	0.0	3.0
For standing up to a bully	0.6	0.0	0.7	4.5	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.6	6.7	0.0	4.5	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	2.5	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	3.0
Sexual harassment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total reasons	100.0	9.2	88.3	13.5	59.1	40.9	86.5	1.4	95.7

Note: 107 respondents (97 males, 8 females, 2 non-gender specific) reported 163 reasons as to why they were targeted for bullying they are currently experiencing that has lasted six months or more. Non gender specific redacted for privacy reasons but included in all aggregates.

Table 73 CFA respondents currently bullied six or more months – why they were targeted, by service, gender and role

Currently bullied for 6 months +: to the best of your knowledge why were you targeted?	CFA All respondents	CFA females	CFA Males	CFA non-operational staff	CFA Non Operational females	CFA Non Operational males	CFA Career firefighters	CFA Career firefighter females	CFA Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by employer / management	6.0	0.0	6.8	6.7	0.0	14.3	5.8	0.0	5.8
For being a union member	17.9	0.0	20.3	6.7	0.0	14.3	21.2	0.0	21.2
For being a career firefighter	25.4	0.0	28.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	32.7	0.0	32.7
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	1.5	0.0	1.7	6.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	3.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.8
Reasons unclear (not discernible from survey response)	3.0	12.5	1.7	6.7	12.5	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Personal rivalry	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Difference of opinion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Personality clash	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Questioning bad authority	7.5	12.5	6.8	6.7	12.5	0.0	7.7	0.0	7.7
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	1.5	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Female / Gender discrimination	4.5	37.5	0.0	20.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Intemperate, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supportive of the union	3.0	12.5	1.7	6.7	12.5	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	1.5	12.5	0.0	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For acting according to conscience	4.5	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	5.8
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	3.0	12.5	1.7	13.3	12.5	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	1.5	0.0	1.7	6.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	7.5	0.0	8.5	6.7	0.0	14.3	7.7	0.0	7.7
For standing up to a bully	1.5	0.0	1.7	6.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sexual harassment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total reasons	100.0	11.9	88.1	22.4	53.3	46.7	77.6	0.0	100.0

Note: 44 CFA respondents (40 males, 4 females) reported 67 reasons as to why they were targeted for bullying they are currently experiencing that has lasted six months or more.

Table 73 shows no CFA female career firefighters report currently being bullied for more than 6 months, whereas a small cohort of CFA non-operational female staff report they are, citing targeting due to gender discrimination primarily. Male CFA career firefighters see themselves primarily targeted *because* they are career firefighters (32.7%), and secondly because they are union members (21.2%). More cite their questioning of bad authority (7.7%) and holding others to professional standards of conduct (7.7%) to be frequent causes of their targeting than see it as a case of employer industrial tactics (5.8%).

In Table 74, the small cohort of MFB female firefighters currently bullied for six or more months nominate their employer's industrial relations tactics (50%) and being a career firefighter (50%) as the reasons. Male firefighters emphasise employer industrial tactics and union membership. MFB Non-operational females consider being a union member, having a personal characteristic (eg race, disability, etc), being female, having a health issue, and scape-goating as making targets of them, while male non-operational staff nominate their employer's industrial tactics or holding a different opinion to others the reason for their bullying. Overall, employer industrial tactics (33.3%) and union membership (31.3%) are the most cited causes for current bullying experienced for more than six months duration by staff in the MFB.

Table 74 MFB respondents currently bullied six or more months – why they were targeted, by service, gender and role

Currently bullied for 6 months +: to the best of your knowledge why were you targeted?	MFB respondents	MFB females	MFB Males	MFB non-operational staff	MFB Non Operational females	MFB Non Operational males	MFB Career firefighters	MFB Career firefighter females	MFB Career firefighter males
As an industrial relations tactic by employer / management	33.3	14.3	35.3	14.3	0.0	50.0	34.8	50.0	34.9
For being a union member	31.3	14.3	34.1	14.3	20.0	0.0	32.6	0.0	34.9
For being a career firefighter	17.7	14.3	18.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.1	50.0	19.3
Ego, need to dominate others, sociopathy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Volunteer resentment / hostility to career firefighters	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reasons unclear (not discernible from survey response)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Personal rivalry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Difference of opinion	1.0	0.0	1.2	14.3	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Easy Target (Young, naive, junior rank)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Personality clash	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
Personal characteristic Eg, race, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristic	1.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expressing a viewpoint or opinion	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
Questioning bad authority	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
Unwarranted punishment / retribution (untrue accusation).	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Female / Gender discrimination	1.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incompetent supervision skills	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Intemperate, unbalanced behavior, poor self-discipline	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supportive of the union	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Out of step with prevailing 'macho' culture	2.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	1.2
Scape goating, deflecting blame away from themselves	1.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
For acting according to conscience	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not condoning other peoples bad behavior	2.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	1.2
Overly strident authoritarian command	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not supporting Career staff resentment / hostility to volunteers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resentment for holding others to professional standards	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0
For standing up to a bully	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inconsiderate of needs / not family friendly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pregnancy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health issue	1.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interdepartmental / work unit rivalry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Desire to ingratiate themselves with more senior ranks	4.2	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	4.8
Sexual harassment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not joining their group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not part of a dominant local clique	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total reasons	100.0	7.3	88.5	7.3	71.4	28.6	92.7	2.2	93.3

Note: 63 respondents (57 males, 4 females, 2 non-gender specific) reported 96 reasons as to why they were targeted for bullying they are currently experiencing that has lasted six months or more. Non gender specific redacted for privacy reasons but included in all aggregates.

4.8 Governance processes

4.8.1 Use of formal complaint processes

When trust in the leadership of an organisation is low, where do its staff turn for protection from unfair treatment and bullying? As we have seen, firefighters and other respondents report that a large degree of bullying behaviour that they feel directed at them is by the senior management of the organisations for which they work. Can they expect fair treatment? Formal complaints processes are standard features of the human resources practices of public organisations, but their impartiality, commitment to justice, investigative resources, capacity to monitor workplaces after an intervention, or even their actual agenda, may mean that staff are afforded little protection by them. We present staff attitudes to existing processes in the following tables.

Of the 885 respondents to the survey, 281 stated that in the course of their employment they had experienced behaviour consistent with the definition of bullying we provided (Section 4.2). These respondents were additionally asked questions to ascertain their use and experience of formal reporting processes.

Table 75 indicates that overall, 79% of bullied respondents did not make use of a formal reporting process, while 21% did so. A larger proportion of bullied females (33.3%) availed themselves of the formal processes than did males (19.8%). Non-operational bullied staff were roughly twice as likely as bullied firefighters (37.5% compared with 18.9%) to formally complain. The gender difference as to who formally complained was more pronounced among non-operational staff (females 45.5%, males 33.3%) than firefighters (females 20%, males 18.6%). A higher proportion of CFA bullied respondents (24.8%) formally complained than did those of the MFB (16.4%). Male CFA non-operational respondents complained proportionally more often (31.3%) than their female counterparts (20%). Gender differences were less pronounced among MFB firefighters than CFA firefighters in terms of their formal reporting.

Table 75 Did staff experiencing bullying make a formal complaint – by gender and role

(To people who experienced bullying) Did you make a complaint under a formal reporting process that you were being bullied?		All bullied respondents	Females	Males	All non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Yes	21.0	33.3	19.8	37.5	45.5	33.3	18.9	20.0	18.6
	No	79.0	66.7	80.2	62.5	54.5	66.7	81.1	80.0	81.4
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	Yes	24.8	25.0	24.8	28.6	20.0	31.3	24.2	33.3	24.0
	No	75.2	75.0	75.2	71.4	80.0	68.8	75.8	66.7	76.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	Yes	16.4	38.5	13.3	54.5	66.7	40.0	12.8	14.3	12.0
	No	83.6	61.5	86.7	45.5	33.3	60.0	87.2	85.7	88.0
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 76 suggests that bullied persons with a length of service around 10-20 years have the highest propensity to formally complain about their treatment, in both services, except for those with more than 35 years of service.

Table 76 Did staff experiencing bullying make a formal complaint – by length of service

(To people who experienced bullying) Did you make a complaint under a formal reporting process that you were being bullied?		All bullied respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Yes	21.0	12.5	17.9	17.2	24.6	30.2	17.6	12.8	13.8	36.8
	No	79.0	87.5	82.1	82.8	75.4	69.8	82.4	87.2	86.2	63.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.7	10.0	10.3	21.7	15.3	6.0	13.9	10.3	6.8
CFA	Yes	24.8	15.4	23.1	15.4	27.5	31.3	20.0	21.4	14.3	50.0
	No	75.2	84.6	76.9	84.6	72.5	68.8	80.0	78.6	85.7	50.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	26.1	20.9	9.8	9.2	4.6	3.9
MFB	Yes	16.4	0.0	13.3	18.8	19.0	27.3	0.0	8.0	13.6	30.8
	No	83.6	100.0	86.7	81.3	81.0	72.7	100.0	92.0	86.4	69.2
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	2.3	11.7	12.5	16.4	8.6	1.6	19.5	17.2	10.2

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Bullied respondents in their 30's in both services seem to have the highest propensity to make a formal complaint, except for those in the MFB who are over 60, who had the highest propensity (55.6%) to make a formal complaint (table 77).

Table 77 Did staff experiencing bullying make a formal complaint – by age group

(To people who experienced bullying) Did you make a complaint under a formal reporting process that you were being bullied?		All bullied respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Yes	21.0	0.0	16.7	30.0	24.4	14.3	29.7	8.9	19.6	40.0
	No	79.0	100.0	83.3	70.0	75.6	85.7	70.3	91.1	80.4	60.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Yes	24.8	0.0	11.1	44.4	17.9	23.3	30.4	14.3	35.3	16.7
	No	75.2	100.0	88.9	55.6	82.1	76.7	69.6	85.7	64.7	83.3
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Yes	16.4	0.0	33.3	8.3	38.5	0.0	28.6	4.2	11.8	55.6
	No	83.6	0.0	66.7	91.7	61.5	100.0	71.4	95.8	88.2	44.4
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 78 reveals that few respondents who experienced bullying (7.1%) believed that a fair formal reporting process was in place to handle their issue. This confidence was lower in the CFA (5.9%) than the MFB (8.6%). 23.5% had no opinion on the matter, roughly the same in both services, whereas 71.2% of CFA respondents, and 67.2% of MFB respondents said they did not have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place. No female respondents in the CFA believed a fair process was in place, with bullied non-operational females being more definite about there not being one (60%) than bullied CFA female firefighters (33.3%), who otherwise had no view on the matter. Non-operational MFB female respondents to this question were the most confident (33.3%), while their male counterparts believed no fair process existed. Male firefighters

in both services were roughly 69.9% of the opinion that no fair process was in place while 6.3% believed a fair process existed.

Table 78 Did staff experiencing bullying have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation – by gender and role

Did you have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All bullied respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Yes	7.1	14.3	6.6	12.5	18.2	9.5	6.4	10.0	6.3
	No	69.4	61.9	70.2	71.9	63.6	76.2	69.1	60.0	69.6
	Neutral / No opinion	23.5	23.8	23.3	15.6	18.2	14.3	24.5	30.0	24.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	Yes	5.9	0.0	6.2	9.5	0.0	12.5	5.3	0.0	5.4
	No	71.2	50.0	72.4	66.7	60.0	68.8	72.0	33.3	72.9
	Neutral / No opinion	22.9	50.0	21.4	23.8	40.0	18.8	22.7	66.7	21.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	Yes	8.6	23.1	7.1	18.2	33.3	0.0	7.7	14.3	7.4
	No	67.2	69.2	67.3	81.8	66.7	100.0	65.8	71.4	65.7
	Neutral / No opinion	24.2	7.7	25.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.5	14.3	26.9
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Confidence that a fair formal process exists appears to roughly decline with length of service, while belief that one does not exist rises (Table 79). The cohorts with the highest propensity to have no opinion are those with 3-6 years of service, and those with 35+ years. Table 80 indicates that confidence in formal reporting processes tends to decline with age.

Table 79 Did staff experiencing bullying have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation – by length of service

Did you have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All bullied respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Yes	7.1	12.5	7.1	10.3	11.5	7.0	0.0	5.1	3.4	0.0
	No	69.4	56.3	53.6	69.0	72.1	76.7	70.6	69.2	79.3	63.2
	Neutral / No opinion	23.5	31.3	39.3	20.7	16.4	16.3	29.4	25.6	17.2	36.8
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.7	10.0	10.3	21.7	15.3	6.0	13.9	10.3	6.8
CFA	Yes	5.9	7.7	15.4	7.7	7.5	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	No	71.2	53.8	46.2	76.9	72.5	78.1	66.7	85.7	85.7	66.7
	Neutral / No opinion	22.9	38.5	38.5	15.4	20.0	15.6	33.3	14.3	14.3	33.3
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	26.1	20.9	9.8	9.2	4.6	3.9
MFB	Yes	8.6	33.3	0.0	12.5	19.0	9.1	0.0	8.0	4.5	0.0
	No	67.2	66.7	60.0	62.5	71.4	72.7	100.0	60.0	77.3	61.5
	Neutral / No opinion	24.2	0.0	40.0	25.0	9.5	18.2	0.0	32.0	18.2	38.5
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	2.3	11.7	12.5	16.4	8.6	1.6	19.5	17.2	10.2

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 80 Did staff experiencing bullying have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation – by age group

Did you have confidence that a fair formal reporting process was in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All bullied respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Yes	7.1	100.0	16.7	16.7	7.3	8.2	2.7	2.2	2.0	13.3
	No	69.4	0.0	50.0	60.0	73.2	67.3	75.7	75.6	70.6	66.7
	Neutral / No opinion	23.5	0.0	33.3	23.3	19.5	24.5	21.6	22.2	27.5	20.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	Yes	5.9	100.0	11.1	16.7	3.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	No	71.2	0.0	55.6	61.1	71.4	66.7	78.3	71.4	82.4	100.0
	Neutral / No opinion	22.9	0.0	33.3	22.2	25.0	23.3	21.7	28.6	17.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	Yes	8.6	0.0	33.3	16.7	15.4	5.3	7.1	4.2	2.9	22.2
	No	67.2	0.0	33.3	58.3	76.9	68.4	71.4	79.2	64.7	44.4
	Neutral / No opinion	24.2	0.0	33.3	25.0	7.7	26.3	21.4	16.7	32.4	33.3
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.8.2 Who was aware the person believed they were being bullied?

The next questions we report from the survey relates to how aware other personnel were that they were being bullied.

Table 81 reports responses to the question ‘What other personnel did you inform about this bullying?’ The options were: No one; Trusted co-workers; Immediate supervisor; Senior staff; Human Resources Department; United Firefighters Union; Other (a free text option). It permitted more than one selection, whereby 281 respondents who reported experience of bullying indicated 468 entities were informed. Overall, trusted co-workers are most commonly made aware (41%) of the bullying by both females (41.9%) and males (41.6%). Among non-operational staff, males (53.1%) rely on this more than females (38.5%), while among firefighters females (47.1%) do so more than males (40.6%). Non-operational staff, particularly females (23.1%), informed the UFU more than they informed their supervisors (15.4%). The UFU was consulted more often (17.1%) than Human Resources Departments (5.1%), including by females (16.3% vs 14%) overall. Immediate supervisors were consulted more often by firefighters (22%) than by non-operational staff (12.1%). 5.7% of males consulted no one, compared to 2.3% of females. Career firefighter males were the only respondents who informed MFB senior staff, whereas in the CFA only female firefighters did not.

Table 81 Other people informed of the bullying – by gender, service and role of target

What other personnel did you inform about this bullying?		Respondents who were bullied	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	No one	5.3	2.3	5.7	1.7	3.8	0.0	5.9	0.0	6.2
	Trusted co-workers	41.7	41.9	41.6	46.6	38.5	53.1	41.0	47.1	40.6
	Immediate supervisor	20.7	20.9	20.7	12.1	15.4	9.4	22.0	29.4	21.6
	Senior staff	5.8	2.3	6.2	3.4	3.8	3.1	6.1	0.0	6.4
	Human Resources Dept.	5.1	14.0	4.3	15.5	15.4	15.6	3.7	11.8	3.3
	United Firefighters Union	17.1	16.3	17.1	19.0	23.1	15.6	16.8	5.9	17.2
	Other	4.3	2.3	4.5	1.7	0.0	3.1	4.6	5.9	4.6
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	9.2	90.0	12.4	44.8	55.2	87.6	4.1	94.9
CFA	No one	5.7	6.3	5.7	3.0	10.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	6.3
	Trusted co-workers	39.8	43.8	39.6	48.5	40.0	52.2	38.6	50.0	38.3
	Immediate supervisor	21.1	25.0	20.8	18.2	30.0	13.0	21.5	16.7	21.6
	Senior staff	7.3	6.3	7.3	6.1	10.0	4.3	7.5	0.0	7.7
	Human Resources Dept.	6.1	6.3	6.1	9.1	0.0	13.0	5.7	16.7	5.4
	United Firefighters Union	16.5	12.5	16.7	12.1	10.0	13.0	17.1	16.7	17.1
	Other	3.4	0.0	3.7	3.0	0.0	4.3	3.5	0.0	3.6
	Cohort as % of total	55.8	6.1	93.9	12.6	30.3	69.7	87.4	2.6	97.4
MFB	No one	4.8	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	6.0
	Trusted co-workers	44.0	40.7	44.3	44.0	37.5	55.6	44.0	45.5	43.7
	Immediate supervisor	20.3	18.5	20.5	4.0	6.3	0.0	22.5	36.4	21.6
	Senior staff	3.9	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	4.8
	Human Resources Dept.	3.9	18.5	1.7	24.0	25.0	22.2	1.1	9.1	0.6
	United Firefighters Union	17.9	18.5	17.6	28.0	31.3	22.2	16.5	0.0	17.4
	Other	5.3	3.7	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	9.1	6.0
	Cohort as % of total	44.2	13.0	85.0	12.1	64.0	36.0	87.9	6.0	91.8

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). 468 instances of informing are reported, 43 instances by females, 421 by males and 4 by people by non-gender specific persons.

Table 82 presents the data in relation to length of service. CFA Staff with less than 3 years of service tend more than others (26.3%) not to consult anyone, whereas their counterparts in the MFB (albeit a small cohort) tend to do so. Trusted co-workers are consistently consulted the most across all length of service cohorts, while the UFU is generally consulted more the longer people are in the job. The MFB HR department is consulted less frequently (3.9%) than that of the CFA (6.1%).

Table 82 Other people informed of the bullying – by length of service

What other personnel did you inform about this bullying?		Respondents who were bullied	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	No one	5.3	22.7	2.5	0.0	2.7	5.2	3.2	10.7	4.5	8.8
	Trusted co-workers	41.7	50.0	60.0	50.0	40.9	35.1	41.9	37.5	43.2	23.5
	Immediate supervisor	20.7	13.6	12.5	20.4	24.5	20.8	19.4	25.0	15.9	23.5
	Senior staff	5.8	0.0	7.5	7.4	8.2	5.2	6.5	3.6	6.8	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	5.1	4.5	2.5	0.0	5.5	13.0	6.5	1.8	2.3	5.9
	United Firefighters Union	17.1	9.1	12.5	14.8	16.4	18.2	22.6	12.5	20.5	29.4
	Other	4.3	0.0	2.5	7.4	1.8	2.6	0.0	8.9	6.8	8.8
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.7	8.5	11.5	23.5	16.5	6.6	12.0	9.4	7.3
CFA	No one	5.7	26.3	5.6	0.0	2.9	3.6	3.6	8.7	10.0	10.0
	Trusted co-workers	39.8	42.1	55.6	44.4	38.6	37.5	39.3	34.8	40.0	30.0
	Immediate supervisor	21.1	15.8	11.1	22.2	22.9	21.4	21.4	30.4	10.0	20.0
	Senior staff	7.3	0.0	5.6	11.1	12.9	5.4	7.1	4.3	0.0	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	6.1	5.3	0.0	0.0	5.7	12.5	7.1	4.3	0.0	10.0
	United Firefighters Union	16.5	10.5	16.7	14.8	15.7	16.1	21.4	13.0	30.0	20.0
	Other	3.4	0.0	5.6	7.4	1.4	3.6	0.0	4.3	10.0	10.0
	Cohort as % of total	55.8	7.3	6.9	10.3	26.8	21.5	10.7	8.8	3.8	3.8
MFB	No one	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	9.5	0.0	12.1	2.9	8.3
	Trusted co-workers	44.0	100.0	63.6	55.6	45.0	28.6	66.7	39.4	44.1	20.8
	Immediate supervisor	20.3	0.0	13.6	18.5	27.5	19.0	0.0	21.2	17.6	25.0
	Senior staff	3.9	0.0	9.1	3.7	0.0	4.8	0.0	3.0	8.8	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	3.9	0.0	4.5	0.0	5.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	2.9	4.2
	United Firefighters Union	17.9	0.0	9.1	14.8	17.5	23.8	33.3	12.1	17.6	33.3
	Other	5.3	0.0	0.0	7.4	2.5	0.0	0.0	12.1	5.9	8.3
	Cohort as % of total	44.2	1.4	10.6	13.0	19.3	10.1	1.4	15.9	16.4	11.6

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). 468 instances of informing are reported, 43 instances by females, 421 by males and 4 by people by non-gender specific persons.

Table 83 considers responses by age category, and suggests that the propensities to consult with different personnel are fairly stable across age categories, apart from a mild drop-off in reliance on trusted co-workers overall.

Table 83 Other people informed of the bullying – by age group

What other personnel did you inform about this bullying?		Respondents who were bullied	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	No one	5.3	0.0	10.5	1.7	4.3	3.7	5.7	3.3	10.5	4.5
	Trusted co-workers	41.7	100.0	52.6	51.7	44.3	42.0	32.9	50.8	33.7	27.3
	Immediate supervisor	20.7	0.0	10.5	19.0	22.9	23.5	20.0	19.7	20.9	22.7
	Senior staff	5.8	0.0	0.0	6.9	8.6	9.9	5.7	3.3	3.5	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	5.1	0.0	5.3	1.7	4.3	3.7	10.0	3.3	5.8	9.1
	United Firefighters Union	17.1	0.0	21.1	13.8	14.3	14.8	22.9	14.8	17.4	27.3
	Other	4.3	0.0	0.0	5.2	1.4	2.5	2.9	4.9	8.1	9.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.2	4.1	12.4	15.0	17.3	15.0	13.0	18.4	4.7
CFA	No one	5.7	0.0	13.3	0.0	7.0	3.6	4.5	7.4	9.1	16.7
	Trusted co-workers	39.8	100.0	46.7	50.0	44.2	33.9	31.8	55.6	27.3	33.3
	Immediate supervisor	21.1	0.0	13.3	16.7	23.3	26.8	20.5	11.1	27.3	16.7
	Senior staff	7.3	0.0	0.0	8.3	9.3	12.5	9.1	0.0	3.0	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	6.1	0.0	6.7	2.8	4.7	5.4	6.8	7.4	12.1	0.0
	United Firefighters Union	16.5	0.0	20.0	16.7	9.3	16.1	25.0	14.8	15.2	16.7
	Other	3.4	0.0	0.0	5.6	2.3	1.8	2.3	3.7	6.1	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	55.8	0.4	5.7	13.8	16.5	21.5	16.9	10.3	12.6	2.3
MFB	No one	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	4.0	7.7	0.0	11.3	0.0
	Trusted co-workers	44.0	0.0	75.0	54.5	44.4	60.0	34.6	47.1	37.7	25.0
	Immediate supervisor	20.3	0.0	0.0	22.7	22.2	16.0	19.2	26.5	17.0	25.0
	Senior staff	3.9	0.0	0.0	4.5	7.4	4.0	0.0	5.9	3.8	0.0
	Human Resources Dept.	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	15.4	0.0	1.9	12.5
	United Firefighters Union	17.9	0.0	25.0	9.1	22.2	12.0	19.2	14.7	18.9	31.3
	Other	5.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	4.0	3.8	5.9	9.4	6.3
	Cohort as % of total	44.2	0.0	1.9	10.6	13.0	12.1	12.6	16.4	25.6	7.7

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). 468 instances of informing are reported, 43 instances by females, 421 by males and 4 by people by non-gender specific persons.

4.8.3 Did a senior manager intercede in the bullying

The role of senior management in resolving workplace aggression issues are explored in Tables 84 – 86. Table 84 indicates that, overall, senior managers interceded in 25.6% of bullying cases, and as a consequence of their intervention improved the situation for 8.5% of respondents, worsened the situation for 5%, and had no effect discernible to 12.1% of respondents. They interceded in proportionally more cases concerning female staff (42.9%) than males (24.4%), tending to worsen (14.3%) rather than improve (9.5%) their situation, apart from when they had no discernible impact (19%). Senior manager intervention was proportionally more common for non-operational staff (31.3%) than firefighters (24.9%). Among firefighters, senior manager intervention occurred more often in female cases (60%) than male cases (23.6%), to equally good and bad effect in the MFB, and to no effect in the CFA. 18.2% of female non-operational respondents overall noted in free text under ‘other’ that the senior managers were the perpetrators of the bullying they experienced.

Table 84 Whether senior manager interceded in bullying – by service, gender and role

Did your senior manager intercede in your case?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	No they did not intercede	57.3	42.9	58.1	43.8	54.5	38.1	59.0	30.0	59.9
	Yes, and it improved my situation	8.5	9.5	8.5	6.3	0.0	9.5	8.8	20.0	8.4
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	5.0	14.3	4.3	9.4	9.1	9.5	4.4	20.0	3.8
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	12.1	19.0	11.6	15.6	18.2	14.3	11.6	20.0	11.4
	Not reported to them / unaware	4.3	0.0	4.7	9.4	0.0	14.3	3.6	0.0	3.8
	They are being bullied also	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
	They were doing the bullying	4.3	9.5	3.9	9.4	18.2	4.8	3.6	0.0	3.8
	Other	7.8	4.8	8.1	6.3	0.0	9.5	8.0	10.0	8.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.5	91.8	11.4	34.4	65.6	88.6	4.0	95.2
CFA	No they did not intercede	51.0	37.5	51.7	42.9	60.0	37.5	52.3	0.0	53.5
	Yes, and it improved my situation	6.5	0.0	6.9	9.5	0.0	12.5	6.1	0.0	6.2
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	5.9	0.0	6.2	9.5	0.0	12.5	5.3	0.0	5.4
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	14.4	37.5	13.1	14.3	20.0	12.5	14.4	66.7	13.2
	Not reported to them / unaware	5.9	0.0	6.2	4.8	0.0	6.3	6.1	0.0	6.2
	They are being bullied also	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	6.5	12.5	6.2	9.5	20.0	6.3	6.1	0.0	6.2
	Other	9.8	12.5	9.7	9.5	0.0	12.5	9.8	33.3	9.3
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.2	94.8	13.7	23.8	76.2	86.3	2.3	97.7
MFB	No they did not intercede	64.8	46.2	66.4	45.5	50.0	40.0	66.7	42.9	67.6
	Yes, and it improved my situation	10.9	15.4	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	28.6	11.1
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	3.9	23.1	1.8	9.1	16.7	0.0	3.4	28.6	1.9
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	9.4	7.7	9.7	18.2	16.7	20.0	8.5	0.0	9.3
	Not reported to them / unaware	2.3	0.0	2.7	18.2	0.0	40.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	They are being bullied also	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
	They were doing the bullying	1.6	7.7	0.9	9.1	16.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	Other	5.5	0.0	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	6.5
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	10.2	88.3	8.6	54.5	45.5	91.4	6.0	92.3

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Reported intervention in bullying cases by senior managers remains relatively stable across length of service cohorts (Table 85). There is a stronger propensity for CFA respondents to identify senior managers as the perpetrator as length of service increases, which is not suggested in the MFB responses. A similarly stable pattern appears across age groups (Table 86).

Table 87 finally considers the question of senior manager intervention in relation to just those cases where a formal complaint was made. 59 respondents indicated they made a formal complaint in relation to their experience of being bullied (7 female, 51 male, 1 non-gender specific). 57.1% of females reported senior manager intervention compared to 35.3% of males, with intervention occurring in all female firefighter respondent's cases. 28% of females and 19.6% of males deemed

it had no effect. It equally either worsened or had no effect in non-operational female cases, and equally improved or had no effect in female firefighter cases. Senior management intervention occurred in 42.9% of MFB cases compared to 34.2% of CFA cases following a formal complaint, and is deemed by respondents to have had no impact in 28.6% of MFB cases compared to 15.8% of CFA cases.

Table 85 Whether senior manager interceded in bullying – by length of service

Did your senior manager intercede in your case?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	No they did not intercede	57.3	72.7	67.9	54.8	63.8	59.5	50.0	47.4	48.6	55.0
	Yes, and it improved my situation	8.5	9.1	14.3	9.7	8.6	4.8	0.0	15.8	5.7	5.0
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	5.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	5.2	14.3	0.0	5.3	2.9	5.0
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	12.1	18.2	7.1	16.1	12.1	9.5	22.2	2.6	22.9	5.0
	Not reported to them / unaware	4.3	0.0	3.6	0.0	1.7	9.5	11.1	5.3	2.9	5.0
	They are being bullied also	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	4.3	0.0	3.6	0.0	1.7	0.0	11.1	7.9	5.7	15.0
	Other	7.8	0.0	0.0	19.4	6.9	0.0	5.6	15.8	8.6	10.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	3.9	10.0	11.0	20.6	14.9	6.4	13.5	12.5	7.1
CFA	No they did not intercede	51.0	66.7	50.0	41.2	55.3	62.1	47.1	33.3	62.5	25.0
	Yes, and it improved my situation	6.5	11.1	25.0	5.9	7.9	3.4	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	5.9	0.0	8.3	0.0	7.9	10.3	0.0	6.7	0.0	12.5
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	14.4	22.2	8.3	17.6	13.2	13.8	23.5	6.7	12.5	12.5
	Not reported to them / unaware	5.9	0.0	8.3	0.0	2.6	10.3	11.8	6.7	12.5	0.0
	They are being bullied also	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	11.8	20.0	12.5	37.5
	Other	9.8	0.0	0.0	35.3	10.5	0.0	5.9	20.0	0.0	12.5
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	5.9	7.8	11.1	24.8	19.0	11.1	9.8	5.2	5.2
MFB	No they did not intercede	64.8	100.0	81.3	71.4	80.0	53.8	100.0	56.5	44.4	75.0
	Yes, and it improved my situation	10.9	0.0	6.3	14.3	10.0	7.7	0.0	21.7	7.4	8.3
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1	0.0	4.3	3.7	0.0
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	9.4	0.0	6.3	14.3	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.9	0.0
	Not reported to them / unaware	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	4.3	0.0	8.3
	They are being bullied also	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	1.6	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0
	Other	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	11.1	8.3
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	1.6	12.5	10.9	15.6	10.2	0.8	18.0	21.1	9.4

Note: Sample comprised 281 respondents who experienced bullying (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 86 Whether senior manager interceded in bullying – by age group

Did your senior manager intercede in your case?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	No they did not intercede	57.3	100.0	41.7	56.7	63.4	69.4	48.6	55.6	56.9	40.0
	Yes, and it improved my situation	8.5	0.0	8.3	13.3	12.2	8.2	2.7	11.1	5.9	6.7
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	5.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	4.9	2.0	10.8	2.2	5.9	6.7
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	12.1	0.0	33.3	3.3	4.9	10.2	24.3	6.7	17.6	6.7
	Not reported to them / unaware	4.3	0.0	8.3	0.0	2.4	8.2	5.4	4.4	2.0	6.7
	They are being bullied also	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	4.3	0.0	8.3	0.0	2.4	0.0	5.4	6.7	3.9	20.0
	Other	7.8	0.0	0.0	20.0	9.8	0.0	2.7	13.3	5.9	13.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.4	4.3	10.7	14.6	17.4	13.2	16.0	18.1	5.3
CFA	No they did not intercede	51.0	100.0	33.3	38.9	64.3	60.0	39.1	57.1	52.9	16.7
	Yes, and it improved my situation	6.5	0.0	11.1	11.1	7.1	10.0	4.3	4.8	0.0	0.0
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	5.9	0.0	0.0	11.1	3.6	3.3	4.3	4.8	11.8	16.7
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	14.4	0.0	44.4	5.6	3.6	16.7	30.4	0.0	23.5	0.0
	Not reported to them / unaware	5.9	0.0	11.1	0.0	3.6	10.0	8.7	4.8	5.9	0.0
	They are being bullied also	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	8.7	14.3	5.9	50.0
	Other	9.8	0.0	0.0	33.3	14.3	0.0	4.3	14.3	0.0	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	54.4	0.7	5.9	11.8	18.3	19.6	15.0	13.7	11.1	3.9
MFB	No they did not intercede	64.8	0.0	66.7	83.3	61.5	84.2	64.3	54.2	58.8	55.6
	Yes, and it improved my situation	10.9	0.0	0.0	16.7	23.1	5.3	0.0	16.7	8.8	11.1
	Yes , and it worsened my situation	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	21.4	0.0	2.9	0.0
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation.	9.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	14.3	12.5	14.7	11.1
	Not reported to them / unaware	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	4.2	0.0	11.1
	They are being bullied also	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0
	They were doing the bullying	1.6	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0
	Other	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	8.8	11.1
	Cohort as % of total	45.6	0.0	2.3	9.4	10.2	14.8	10.9	18.8	26.6	7.0

Note: Sample comprised 281 staff who reported being bullied (21 females, 258 males, 2 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 87 Respondents who made a formal complaint: whether senior manager interceded in bullying – by service, gender and role

(Persons who lodged formal complaint) Did your senior manager intercede in your case?		Respondents experiencing bullying who made complaint	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	No they did not intercede	47.5	28.6	49.0	41.7	40.0	42.9	48.9	0.0	50.0
	Yes, and it improved my situation	5.1	14.3	3.9	8.3	0.0	14.3	4.3	50.0	2.3
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	11.9	14.3	11.8	8.3	20.0	0.0	12.8	0.0	13.6
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation	20.3	28.6	19.6	25.0	20.0	28.6	19.1	50.0	18.2
	Other -they were not informed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other -they were perpetrtaor	3.4	14.3	2.0	16.7	20.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other - they were bullied too	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	11.9	0.0	13.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.9	0.0	15.9
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	11.9	86.4	20.3	41.7	58.3	79.7	4.3	93.6
CFA	No they did not intercede	52.6	50.0	52.8	50.0	100.0	40.0	53.1	0.0	54.8
	Yes, and it improved my situation	5.3	0.0	5.6	16.7	0.0	20.0	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	13.2	0.0	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.6	0.0	16.1
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation	15.8	50.0	13.9	16.7	0.0	20.0	15.6	100.0	12.9
	Other -they were not informed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other -they were perpetrtaor	2.6	0.0	2.8	16.7	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other - they were bullied too	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	10.5	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.9
	Cohort as % of total	64.4	5.3	94.7	15.8	16.7	83.3	84.2	3.1	96.9
MFB	No they did not intercede	38.1	20.0	40.0	33.3	25.0	50.0	40.0	0.0	38.5
	Yes, and it improved my situation	4.8	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	100.0	0.0
	Yes, and it worsened my situation	9.5	20.0	6.7	16.7	25.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	7.7
	Yes, but it had no impact on my situation	28.6	20.0	33.3	33.3	25.0	50.0	26.7	0.0	30.8
	Other -they were not informed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other -they were perpetrtaor	4.8	20.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other - they were bullied too	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	14.3	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	23.1
	Cohort as % of total	35.6	23.8	71.4	28.6	66.7	33.3	71.4	6.7	86.7

Note: Sample comprises 59 respondents who lodged a formal complaint in relation to bullying (7 female, 51 males, 1 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.8.4 Satisfaction with the formal complaint process

Respondents who indicated they had lodged a complaint through a formal process were asked to indicate their level of agreement / disagreement with the statement 'My complaint was fairly considered and I am satisfied with the outcome'. The results are presented in Table 88.

Overall, 83.1% of respondents disagreed with the proposition, 10.2% agreed and 6.8% were neutral. Females more strongly disagreed than males (85.7% vs 56.9%), and no females agreed with the proposition or were neutral compared with 11.8% of males who did agree. A larger proportion of non-operational staff strongly disagreed (83.3%) than did firefighters (53.2%), a difference that was more pronounced in the MFB than the CFA. No MFB respondents agreed with the proposition, 90.5% disagreed and 9.5% were neutral. 78.9% of CFA staff disagreed, 10.2% agreed and 5.3% were neutral.

Even though this is a small sample, it nevertheless suggests considerable dissatisfaction with the way formal complaints processes were experienced by the staff of either service that used them, though the CFA process seems to be slightly better regarded than that of the MFB.

Table 88 Respondents who made a formal complaint: satisfaction with outcome and process by service, gender and role

(To respondents who reported their bullying through a formal process) My complaint was fairly considered and I am satisfied with the outcome		Bullied respondents who formally complained	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-Operational females	Non-Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly disagree	59.3	85.7	56.9	83.3	80.0	85.7	53.2	100.0	52.3
	Mostly disagree	23.7	14.3	23.5	8.3	20.0	0.0	27.7	0.0	27.3
	Neutral / No opinion	6.8	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	0.0	9.1
	Mostly agree	6.8	0.0	7.8	8.3	0.0	14.3	6.4	0.0	6.8
	Strongly agree	3.4	0.0	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	11.9	86.4	20.3	41.7	58.3	79.7	4.3	93.6
CFA	Strongly disagree	63.2	100.0	61.1	83.3	100.0	80.0	59.4	100.0	58.1
	Mostly disagree	15.8	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.8	0.0	19.4
	Neutral / No opinion	5.3	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.5
	Mostly agree	10.5	0.0	11.1	16.7	0.0	20.0	9.4	0.0	9.7
	Strongly agree	5.3	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.5
	Cohort as % of total	64.4	5.3	94.7	15.8	16.7	83.3	84.2	3.1	96.9
MFB	Strongly disagree	52.4	80.0	46.7	83.3	75.0	100.0	40.0	100.0	38.5
	Mostly disagree	38.1	20.0	40.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	46.7	0.0	46.2
	Neutral / No opinion	9.5	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	15.4
	Mostly agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	35.6	23.8	71.4	28.6	66.7	33.3	71.4	6.7	86.7

Note: Sample comprises 59 respondents who lodged a formal complaint in relation to bullying (7 female, 51 males, 1 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

4.8.5 Whether it improved the situation to formally complain

Respondents who lodged a formal complaint in relation to bullying they had experienced were asked to indicate the extent they disagreed / agreed with the proposition 'My situation improved after making a formal complaint'. Results are presented in Table 89. Overall, 13.6% of respondents agreed with the proposition, 5.1% were neutral and 81.4% disagreed. Male firefighters were the only respondents to express neutrality of the subject (6.8%). 90.5% of MFB respondents disagreed compared with 76.3% from the CFA. 4.8% of MFB respondents agreed compared with 18.4% of CFA respondents.

This again suggests very low satisfaction with the formal complaints processes in place at the time these people used them.

4.8.6 Assistance provided by staff to lodge a formal complaint

To make a formal complaint about the conduct of another person in one's workplace, particularly in relation to a person in authority, is often a deeply worrying step to take. The decision is often taken as a last resort at a point of extreme desperation. In organisations where staff do not have confidence in the fairness or integrity of the complaints process, it is therefore important that they have access to impartial information and counsel as to what they need to do to establish the basis of their case, particularly where the hostile behaviour they're experiencing is subtle and covert. They also need to be protected from subsequent vindictiveness by the person they accuse, whether their case is upheld or not.

The extent to which respondents who made formal complaints of bullying felt they were assisted was tested by seeking their level of disagreement / agreement with the proposition 'I was given advice and support in making my application by my employer'. The results are presented in Table 90.

Table 89 Respondents who made a formal complaint: whether situation improved - by service, gender and role

(To respondents who reported their bullying through a formal process) My situation improved after making a formal complaint		Bullied respondents who formally complained	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly disagree	50.8	57.1	51.0	58.3	60.0	57.1	48.9	50.0	50.0
	Mostly disagree	30.5	28.6	29.4	25.0	20.0	28.6	31.9	50.0	29.5
	Neutral / No opinion	5.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	6.8
	Mostly agree	10.2	14.3	9.8	16.7	20.0	14.3	8.5	0.0	9.1
	Strongly agree	3.4	0.0	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	11.9	86.4	20.3	41.7	58.3	79.7	4.3	93.6
CFA	Strongly disagree	52.6	50.0	52.8	66.7	100.0	60.0	50.0	0.0	51.6
	Mostly disagree	23.7	50.0	22.2	16.7	0.0	20.0	25.0	100.0	22.6
	Neutral / No opinion	5.3	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.5
	Mostly agree	13.2	0.0	13.9	16.7	0.0	20.0	12.5	0.0	12.9
	Strongly agree	5.3	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.5
	Cohort as % of total	64.4	5.3	94.7	15.8	16.7	83.3	84.2	3.1	96.9
MFB	Strongly disagree	47.6	60.0	46.7	50.0	50.0	50.0	46.7	100.0	46.2
	Mostly disagree	42.9	20.0	46.7	33.3	25.0	50.0	46.7	0.0	46.2
	Neutral / No opinion	4.8	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	7.7
	Mostly agree	4.8	20.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	35.6	23.8	71.4	28.6	66.7	33.3	71.4	6.7	86.7

Note: Sample comprises 59 respondents who lodged a formal complaint in relation to bullying (7 female, 51 males, 1 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 90 Respondents who made a formal complaint: whether employer provided advice and support in making formal complaint - by service, gender and role

(To respondents who reported their bullying through a formal process) I was given advice and support in making my application by my employer		Bullied respondents who formally complained	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Strongly disagree	45.8	57.1	45.1	58.3	60.0	57.1	42.6	50.0	43.2
	Mostly disagree	33.9	14.3	37.3	16.7	20.0	14.3	38.3	0.0	40.9
	Neutral / No opinion	10.2	14.3	7.8	8.3	0.0	14.3	10.6	50.0	6.8
	Mostly agree	5.1	14.3	3.9	16.7	20.0	14.3	2.1	0.0	2.3
	Strongly agree	5.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	6.8
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	11.9	86.4	20.3	41.7	58.3	79.7	4.3	93.6
CFA	Strongly disagree	47.4	100.0	44.4	50.0	100.0	40.0	46.9	100.0	45.2
	Mostly disagree	34.2	0.0	36.1	16.7	0.0	20.0	37.5	0.0	38.7
	Neutral / No opinion	5.3	0.0	5.6	16.7	0.0	20.0	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Mostly agree	5.3	0.0	5.6	16.7	0.0	20.0	3.1	0.0	3.2
	Strongly agree	7.9	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	0.0	9.7
	Cohort as % of total	64.4	5.3	94.7	15.8	16.7	83.3	84.2	3.1	96.9
MFB	Strongly disagree	42.9	40.0	46.7	66.7	50.0	100.0	33.3	0.0	38.5
	Mostly disagree	33.3	20.0	40.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	46.2
	Neutral / No opinion	19.0	20.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	100.0	15.4
	Mostly agree	4.8	20.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Strongly agree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	35.6	23.8	71.4	28.6	66.7	33.3	71.4	6.7	86.7

Note: Sample comprises 59 respondents who lodged a formal complaint in relation to bullying (7 female, 51 males, 1 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

79.7% of respondents disagreed and 10.2% agreed with the proposition overall. Females disagreed less (71.4%) than males (82.4%). Non-operational staff disagreed less (75%) than career firefighters (80.9%) and agreed more (16.7% vs 8.3%). Non-operational and career firefighter female respondents with the CFA completely disagreed with the proposition, while 13.9% of males agreed with it. No MFB career firefighters agreed with the proposition.

5. Observed bullying

5.1 Purpose of the data

Observed bullying is a less reliable measure of the prevalence of bullying phenomena given that several respondents may be describing the same case, while at the same time staff may not be cognizant of covert forms of bullying their colleagues are experiencing unless they are in their confidence, and may or may not be in a position to judge the veracity of that person's perceptions of the intent of the perpetrator.

This data is nevertheless relevant to demonstrating the visibility of these issues, the opinions of respondents who have observed bullying about governance processes, and shows the impact of bullying on those who observe it.

5.2 Who has observed bullying?

296 respondents (20 females, 274 males, 2 non-gender specific) indicated they have observed bullying, representing around 33.4% of respondents, with a significantly larger proportion of non-operational staff (75.6%) in both fire services observing bullying than do career firefighters (31.4%) (Table 91). This divergence is most evident in the MFB where 93.3% of non-operational respondents report having observed bullying compared with 27.9% of MFB firefighters. Female and male firefighters report proportionately similar levels of observed bullying (30.3% and 31.4% respectively), but when non-operational staff are taken into account, a larger proportion of females responded that they have observed bullying (42.6%) than did males (32.8%).

Table 91 Whether respondent has witnessed bullying – by service, gender and role

While a fire service employee, have you witnessed someone else being subjected to bullying?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Yes	33.4	42.6	32.8	75.6	71.4	76.9	31.4	30.3	31.4
	No	66.6	57.4	67.2	24.4	28.6	23.1	68.6	69.7	68.6
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Yes	38.5	38.9	38.5	65.4	50.0	70.0	36.5	33.3	36.6
	No	61.5	61.1	61.5	34.6	50.0	30.0	63.5	66.7	63.4
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Yes	29.8	44.8	28.6	93.3	87.5	100.0	27.9	28.6	27.7
	No	70.2	55.2	71.4	6.7	12.5	0.0	72.1	71.4	72.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises 885 respondents (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 92 Whether respondent has witnessed bullying – by length of service

While a fire service employee, have you witnessed someone else being subjected to bullying?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Yes	33.4	8.2	20.9	31.2	59.1	54.5	70.0	33.3	33.0	53.5
	No	66.6	91.8	79.1	68.8	40.9	45.5	30.0	66.7	67.0	46.5
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
CFA	Yes	38.5	10.9	20.4	30.2	62.3	63.0	70.6	58.3	50.0	62.5
	No	61.5	89.1	79.6	69.8	37.7	37.0	29.4	41.7	50.0	37.5
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Yes	29.8	3.4	21.1	32.0	55.1	41.9	66.7	27.9	28.7	51.4
	No	70.2	96.6	78.9	68.0	44.9	58.1	33.3	72.1	71.3	48.6
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8

Note: Sample comprises 885 respondents (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 92 shows that observed bullying grows with each length of service cohort in both services, peaks at 20-25 years of service, (which is the smallest cohort for both services), plateaus at a lower level for the next 10 years of service and rises again for those with over 35 years of service.

Table 93 Whether respondent has witnessed bullying – by age group

While a fire service employee, have you witnessed someone else being subjected to bullying?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Yes	33.4	11.1	19.5	20.3	27.0	42.9	41.9	35.7	43.5	41.9
	No	66.6	88.9	80.5	79.7	73.0	57.1	58.1	64.3	56.5	58.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
CFA	Yes	38.5	16.7	25.0	22.6	26.8	50.0	52.3	57.1	63.3	38.5
	No	61.5	83.3	75.0	77.4	73.2	50.0	47.7	42.9	36.7	61.5
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Yes	29.8	0.0	10.0	18.2	27.3	36.1	32.7	28.7	37.6	43.3
	No	70.2	100.0	90.0	81.8	72.7	63.9	67.3	71.3	62.4	56.7
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8

Note: Sample comprises 885 respondents (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 93 shows that an increasing proportion of each age cohort in both services reports to have observed bullying up until the age of 40, after which the proportion who observed bullying largely plateaus. This supports two explanations – that a significant amount of the bullying that observers have referred to relates to an earlier period in which bullying was more common, or that older observers (with longer lengths of service) have had more time to accumulate observations.

5.3 Characteristics of observed bullying

5.3.1 Perpetrators

Those 296 respondents who indicated they had observed bullying at some stage in their career with their present employer were asked further questions to elicit some characteristics of what they had observed.

Question 27 sought the status of the perpetrator(s) of the bullying:

On the occasions where you have witnessed others being bullied, who was doing the bullying? (Check all that apply).

- Person of a lower rank to the person being bullied
- A co-worker of the person being bullied
- An immediate supervisor of the person being bullied
- Senior manager / executive
- A volunteer
- Other:

Overall 410 perpetrators of bullying were nominated. Table 94 presents these in categories of perpetrator in order of frequency nominated, which includes recurring categories within the free-text 'other' option provided, according to the characteristics of the respondent nominating them.

Table 94 Perpetrators of observed bullying - both services by gender and role

On the occasions where you have witnessed others being bullied, who was doing the bullying?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Senior manager / executive	31.0	13.8	32.6	34.1	21.4	41.4	30.6	6.7	31.9
	A co-worker of the person being bullied	21.0	34.5	19.9	25.0	28.6	24.1	20.5	40.0	19.5
	An immediate supervisor of the person being bullied	18.0	37.9	16.2	27.3	35.7	20.7	16.9	40.0	15.8
	A volunteer	16.6	3.4	17.8	2.3	0.0	3.4	18.3	6.7	19.0
	Person of a lower rank to the person being bullied	6.6	6.9	6.4	9.1	7.1	10.3	6.3	6.7	6.0
	Public	2.2	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.6
	Media	1.5	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.7
	Social media	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	UFU / Union Officials	0.5	3.4	0.3	2.3	7.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Liberal Party	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Board	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	VFBV	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Government	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Non-operational staff	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Training College Staff	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	General abuse towards staff	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	7.1	92.0	10.7	31.8	65.9	89.3	4.1	95.1

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

31% of perpetrators nominated are senior manager / executives, constituting 34.1% of those nominated as perpetrators by non-operational staff, and 30.6% of those nominated by career firefighters. Females were less inclined (13.8%) to nominate senior managers than were males

(32.6%), particularly female firefighters (6.7%). Immediate supervisors are the main perpetrators nominated by female observers of bullying (37.9%), followed by co-workers (34.5%) which are the second largest category overall at 21%. Volunteers are nominated more frequently by males (17.8%) than are immediate supervisors (16.2%). UFU officials are nominated by one non-operational female staff member in the MFB, and one male firefighter in the CFA.

Table 95 shows the perspective of CFA observers of bullying, in which volunteers are the largest nominated group of perpetrators (25.7%), although they are not nominated by any of the seven female respondents, who nominate immediate supervisors most often (54.5%). Co-workers are second on the list overall (21.4%), followed by senior managers and immediate supervisors (both 20.5%).

Table 95 Perpetrators of observed bullying - CFA by gender and role

On the occasions where you have witnessed others being bullied, who was doing the bullying?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
CFA	Senior manager / executive	20.5	0.0	21.6	26.9	0.0	31.8	19.6	0.0	20.3
	A co-worker of the person being bullied	21.4	36.4	20.6	30.8	25.0	31.8	20.1	42.9	19.2
	An immediate supervisor of the person being bullied	20.5	54.5	18.6	26.9	50.0	22.7	19.6	57.1	18.1
	A volunteer	25.7	0.0	27.1	3.8	0.0	4.5	28.8	0.0	29.9
	Person of a lower rank to the person being bullied	6.7	9.1	6.5	11.5	25.0	9.1	6.0	0.0	6.2
	Public	2.4	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	2.8
	Media	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Social media	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	UFU / Union Officials	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Liberal Party	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Board	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	VFBV	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Non-operational staff	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Training College Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	General abuse towards staff	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
Cohort as % of total		100.0	5.2	94.8	12.4	15.4	84.6	87.6	3.8	96.2

Note: Sample comprises 143 CFA respondents (7 female, 136 male) who reported they observed bullying by 210 perpetrators (individuals and other entities). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 96 relates to observed bullying in the MFB. Senior managers are most often nominated (42%) as the perpetrators of bullying observed by MFB respondents, followed by co-workers (20.5%) and immediate supervisors (15.5%). Females report observance of more bullying by co-workers (33.3%) than do males (19.1%), followed by immediate supervisors (27.8%) (males – 13.5%), and senior managers (22.2%). Senior managers are overwhelmingly observed to have bullied staff by non-operational males (71.4%), are equal most nominated by non-operational females (30%), and most nominated by male firefighters (44.9%), which are the largest cohort of the sample (94%).

Table 96 Perpetrators of observed bullying - MFB by gender and role

On the occasions where you have witnessed others being bullied, who was doing the bullying?		All respondents	Females	Males	N'on-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
MFB	Senior manager / executive	42.0	22.2	44.9	44.4	30.0	71.4	41.8	12.5	43.9
	A co-worker of the person being bullied	20.5	33.3	19.1	16.7	30.0	0.0	20.9	37.5	19.9
	An immediate supervisor of the person being bullied	15.5	27.8	13.5	27.8	30.0	14.3	14.3	25.0	13.5
	A volunteer	7.0	5.6	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	12.5	7.6
	Person of a lower rank to the person being bullied	6.5	5.6	6.2	5.6	0.0	14.3	6.6	12.5	5.8
	Public	2.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.3
	Media	2.5	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	2.9
	Social media	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	UFU / Union Officials	0.5	5.6	0.0	5.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Liberal Party	1.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
	Board	1.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
	VFBV	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Government	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	Non-operational staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Training College Staff	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
	General abuse towards staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	9.0	89.0	9.0	55.6	38.9	91.0	4.4	94.0

Note: Sample comprises 153 MFB respondents (13 female, 138 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported they observed bullying by 200 perpetrators (individuals and other entities). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.3.2 What forms does the observed bullying take?

With relation to the observation of bullying, the survey permitted respondents to cite multiple actions, multiple perpetrators and multiple reasons why the bullying occurred, in their opinion. This prevented consistent reporting of which specific perpetrator category related to which form of bullying and which reason for the bullying.

We can, however, list the frequency with which types of bullying behaviour are cited, and the frequency of different categories of why the person was targeted for bullying.

As with reported bullying that was experienced, many of these references are to bullying that the respondent observed at a very early stage in their career, which some specifically declare was more common in the past than in more recent times.

Question 28 of the survey asked those who had observed bullying: 'What forms does this bullying take? What do the bullies do?' They were provided a free text space, and produced a range of statements that were summarised into propositions and listed in tables according to the frequency with which respondents made them.

Tables 97 indicates that verbal abuse is the most nominated form of bullying observers report (16%), followed by the vilification of firefighters in the mass media in the months leading up to this year's federal election (7%) that many report elsewhere in the survey to have been extremely destructive of morale. Circulating undermining comments about people and belittling people are also relatively frequently reported by respondents.

Some bullying forms could be perpetrated by anyone, including by co-workers and people of lower rank, such as abuse and physical intimidation, while a number of bullying forms nominated relate to hierarchical relationships, such as intimidation by rank (5.1%), withholding career opportunities, micromanaging, being singled out for difficult duties, overloading with work, the arranging of transfers, etc.

Table 97 Forms of observed bullying – in order of frequency cited

Forms of observed bullying	% of all forms cited
Verbal abuse	16.0
Mass media vilification	7.0
Direct or indirect undermining comments / rumour mongering	6.8
Belittling / Making fun of people	5.5
Intimidation by rank	5.1
Intimidation	4.9
Threatening career / job security	4.0
Social media posts	3.8
Exclusion	3.4
Victimisation	2.6
Yelling	2.3
Disrespecting	2.3
Antagonising / threatening emails	2.1
Threats of violence	2.1
Demeaning	2.1
Undermining / disruption of work	2.1
Constant misinformation / dishonesty	2.1
Aggressive behavior	1.7
False accusations	1.7
Denigration	1.5
Withholding career opportunities	1.3
Constant criticism over trivialities	1.3
Unfair / excessive disciplinary action / or threat of it	1.3
Ostracism	1.3
Manipulation	1.1
Constant attacks on conditions of employment	1.1
Vexatious complaint making	1.1
Isolation	1.1
Consistently singling the person out for difficult duties	0.9
Withholding information necessary to work	0.9
Micromanaging	0.9
Humiliation	0.9
Denying person an award / pay progression	0.6
Overloading with work	0.6
Threatening phone calls at home, threatening letters	0.6
Pranks crossing the line between humour and bullying	0.6
Station transfers / being taken on / off shift	0.6
Not denouncing media / public lies about firefighters	0.6
Intimidation by physical size	0.4
No communication	0.4
Prevented from speaking in meeting	0.4
Talking down / talking over someone	0.4
Siding with the bully against the victim	0.4
Sexual humiliation	0.4
Changing work objectives to ensure failure	0.2
Intemperate behavior / tantrum	0.2
Intimidation by seniority (age)	0.2
Provocation / antagonism	0.2
Administering humiliating punishment	0.2
ignoring	0.2
Directing victim to do meaningless tasks	0.2

5.3.3 Observed bullying: why were the victims targeted?

Question 29 offered a free-text space to record a response to: Why do you think these people were targeted for bullying?

The responses are presented in Tables 98a and 98b, arranged in order of frequency cited.

The first three most frequently cited reasons relate to perceived attacks on the workforce associated with industrial relations conflict. Overall, 51.2% of reasons cited constitute management-initiated practices.

Table 98a Reason why the person was targeted for bullying respondent observed – by frequency cited

Reasons why the target was bullied	% of all forms cited
Because they were supporting the union	14.7
Because they were career firefighters	14.5
To undermine community standing of firefighters to attack their conditions	7.5
Easy target they would not fight back	7.2
For expressing their opinion	4.6
Don't know	3.2
Not conforming to management views / strategy	2.9
Speaking out about poor management	2.7
Volunteers believe they can do as they wish with impunity	2.7
Personal flaw of the bully	2.4
Target has skills deficiencies	2.4
Personal animosity	1.9
Envy	1.6
Personal insecurity of bully / to inflate their sense of control	1.6
Managers doing the bidding of politicians	1.6
To force compliance with their views	1.6
Authoritarianism	1.3
Personality clash	1.3
Essentialism	1.3
Poor supervisory skills	1.3
So the bully had their way	1.1
Not a member of their clique	1.1
Greed / self interest	1.1
Manager has behavioural problem / disorder	1.1
Old school culture of 'I was treated this way so I will treated others this way'.	0.8
Union expecting people to follow their line and not ask questions	0.8
Fear of losing their hobby / local status	0.8
Poor communication skills	0.8
They don't see that unacceptable behavior is bullying	0.8
The person did not conform to the bully's idea of 'normal'	0.8
Group power dynamics / pack mentality	0.8

Table 98b Reason why the person was targeted for bullying respondent observed
– by frequency cited (continued)

Being positive in dealings with volunteers	0.5
Made an example of	0.5
Corporate managerialism	0.5
Attitude / behavior that is no longer common / present	0.5
Managers pursuing bonuses	0.5
For being associated with someone else being bullied	0.5
Target was new to the job	0.5
Career opportunity rivalry	0.5
To assert their authority	0.5
Attempt at humour that overstepped mark	0.5
Management pursuing agenda disregarding staff	0.5
Lateral entry employee	0.3
Bully objected to the career path the target was taking	0.3
Sought to undermine performance to justify dismissal / closure	0.3
Brigade do not like new people asking questions	0.3
Gentle natured / questioned bully's attitude	0.3
Manager considered too soft on staff by superiors	0.3
Flawed organisational change process	0.3
Sexual harassment	0.3
Self-seeking / opportunistic media	0.3
Bully wanted his managers to see he was in control	0.3
Rising through the ranks to the expense of others	0.3
Poor HR systems used to attack people	0.3
Hazing ritual	0.3
Bullies resented being held accountable so they undermined superior	0.3
Preserving petty empire / clique	0.3
Culture of tacitly condoning bullying by senior management, responding in 'tick the box' way to complaints.	0.3
For questioning of volunteers skills / ability	0.3
(Accused of having a)Poor work ethic	0.3
Personal gratification of the bully	0.3
Resentment because the target adhered to procedures	0.3
Because the person was their subordinate	0.3

5.3.4 The willingness to report

People who responded that they observed bullying were further asked:

In your opinion, how often do those who are bullied make a formal complaint?
(Mark only one oval).

- Never
- Rarely
- Most times
- Always
- Other:

The results are set out in Table 99.

Table 99 Observers opinion of whether bullied staff make a formal complaint – by service, gender and role

[Of those who observed bullying] In your opinion, how often do those who are bullied make a formal complaint?		All respondents who observed bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Never	17.2	10.0	17.9	22.6	0.0	35.0	16.6	20.0	16.5
	Rarely	72.6	85.0	71.5	67.7	90.0	55.0	73.2	80.0	72.8
	Most times	6.4	0.0	6.9	3.2	0.0	5.0	6.8	0.0	7.1
	Always	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Other	3.4	5.0	3.3	6.5	10.0	5.0	3.0	0.0	3.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	6.8	92.6	10.5	32.3	64.5	89.5	3.8	95.8
CFA	Never	19.6	0.0	20.6	23.5	0.0	28.6	19.0	0.0	19.7
	Rarely	72.7	85.7	72.1	58.8	66.7	57.1	74.6	100.0	73.8
	Most times	5.6	0.0	5.9	5.9	0.0	7.1	5.6	0.0	5.7
	Always	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	2.1	14.3	1.5	11.8	33.3	7.1	0.8	0.0	0.8
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	4.9	95.1	11.9	17.6	82.4	88.1	3.2	96.8
MFB	Never	15.0	15.4	15.2	21.4	0.0	50.0	14.4	33.3	13.6
	Rarely	72.5	84.6	71.0	78.6	100.0	50.0	71.9	66.7	72.0
	Most times	7.2	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.9	0.0	8.3
	Always	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.8
	Other	4.6	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.3
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	8.5	90.2	9.2	50.0	42.9	90.8	4.3	95.0

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

‘Other’ comments were:

- You cannot complain to the very management that perpetrates the bullying.
- They don't want to make it worse.
- They don't for fear of being ridiculed or singled out.
- Raised it verbally with some of the executive however the complaint fell on deaf ears.
- Not sure.
- In the past rarely, in recent times more readily in my experience.
- I don't know.
- Don't Know.
- Don't know.

- Depends on the intensity.

According to the largest proportion (72.6%) of respondents to the survey who observed bullying, those bullied rarely make a complaint, a view held by 85% of females and 71.5% of males. The next largest cohort (17.2% overall) is of respondents who say the people they observe being bullied never make a formal complaint. 0.8% of male firefighters in the MFB was the only instance of support for choice that those who are bullied always make a complaint. No females supported the view that formal complaints were lodged ‘most times’ or ‘always’, and only very small numbers of males did so.

Tables 100 and 101 present respondent views by length of service and age respectively. ‘Rarely’ remains the dominant view across every length of service and all but one (very small) age cohort.

Table 100 Observers opinion of whether bullied staff make a formal complaint – by length of service

[Of those who observed bullying] In your opinion, how often do those who are bullied make a formal complaint?		All respondents who observed bullying	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Never	17.2	30.8	24.1	24.1	13.8	21.4	28.6	6.7	8.3	21.7
	Rarely	72.6	61.5	65.5	65.5	72.3	73.8	64.3	82.2	77.8	73.9
	Most times	6.4	7.7	6.9	10.3	10.8	0.0	7.1	6.7	5.6	0.0
	Always	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
	Other	3.4	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.1	4.8	0.0	4.4	5.6	4.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.4	9.8	9.8	22.0	14.2	4.7	15.2	12.2	7.8
CFA	Never	19.6	27.3	20.0	30.8	21.1	17.2	33.3	14.3	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	72.7	63.6	70.0	69.2	65.8	75.9	58.3	85.7	90.9	100.0
	Most times	5.6	9.1	10.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	8.3	0.0	9.1	0.0
	Always	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	7.7	7.0	9.1	26.6	20.3	8.4	9.8	7.7	3.5
MFB	Never	15.0	50.0	26.3	18.8	3.7	30.8	0.0	3.2	12.0	27.8
	Rarely	72.5	50.0	63.2	62.5	81.5	69.2	100.0	80.6	72.0	66.7
	Most times	7.2	0.0	5.3	18.8	11.1	0.0	0.0	9.7	4.0	0.0
	Always	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0
	Other	4.6	0.0	5.3	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	6.5	8.0	5.6
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	1.3	12.4	10.5	17.6	8.5	1.3	20.3	16.3	11.8

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they have observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 101 Observers opinion of whether bullied staff make a formal complaint – by age group

[Of those who observed bullying] In your opinion, how often do those who are bullied make a formal complaint?		All respondents who observed bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Never	17.2	100.0	18.8	19.2	16.2	19.6	23.1	9.8	14.0	22.2
	Rarely	72.6	0.0	75.0	69.2	70.3	74.5	64.1	74.5	77.2	77.8
	Most times	6.4	0.0	6.3	11.5	10.8	3.9	10.3	5.9	3.5	0.0
	Always	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0
	Other	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	2.0	2.6	9.8	3.5	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.3	5.4	8.8	12.5	17.2	13.2	17.2	19.3	6.1
CFA	Never	19.6	100.0	23.1	14.3	26.3	17.2	26.1	10.0	15.8	20.0
	Rarely	72.7	0.0	76.9	71.4	68.4	79.3	56.5	75.0	84.2	80.0
	Most times	5.6	0.0	0.0	14.3	5.3	3.4	13.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
	Always	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	10.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	0.7	9.1	9.8	13.3	20.3	16.1	14.0	13.3	3.5
MFB	Never	15.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	5.6	22.7	18.8	9.7	13.2	23.1
	Rarely	72.5	0.0	66.7	66.7	72.2	68.2	75.0	74.2	73.7	76.9
	Most times	7.2	0.0	33.3	8.3	16.7	4.5	6.3	6.5	5.3	0.0
	Always	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0
	Other	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	4.5	0.0	9.7	5.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	0.0	2.0	7.8	11.8	14.4	10.5	20.3	24.8	8.5

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they have observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.3.5 Observer's perception of a more senior officer's awareness

Staff willingness to report inappropriate hostile behaviour that is being directed at them will be influenced by their expectation of the response to their submission by those in leadership positions around them. If bullied staff believe that more senior personnel already know of their situation and yet fail to intervene, staff may be less inclined to see much value in making a formal complaint.

Respondents who report observing bullying were asked their opinion: 'How often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?' Tables 102-104 present the results.

Table 102 Observer opinion of a more senior officer's awareness of bullying occurring – by service gender and role

[Of those who observed bullying:] In your opinion, how often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents who observed bullying	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Never	4.4	0.0	4.7	9.7	0.0	15.0	3.8	0.0	3.9
	Rarely	39.5	55.0	38.7	45.2	70.0	35.0	38.9	40.0	39.0
	Most times	41.9	20.0	43.1	35.5	10.0	45.0	42.6	30.0	42.9
	Always	7.4	5.0	7.7	3.2	0.0	5.0	7.9	10.0	7.9
	Other	6.8	20.0	5.8	6.5	20.0	0.0	6.8	20.0	6.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	6.8	92.6	10.5	32.3	64.5	89.5	3.8	95.8
CFA	Never	4.9	0.0	5.1	11.8	0.0	14.3	4.0	0.0	4.1
	Rarely	48.3	57.1	47.8	58.8	100.0	50.0	46.8	25.0	47.5
	Most times	37.8	14.3	39.0	29.4	0.0	35.7	38.9	25.0	39.3
	Always	4.2	14.3	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	25.0	4.1
	Other	4.9	14.3	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	25.0	4.9
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	4.9	95.1	5.7	17.6	82.4	42.6	3.2	96.8
MFB	Never	3.9	0.0	4.3	7.1	0.0	16.7	3.6	0.0	3.8
	Rarely	31.4	53.8	29.7	28.6	57.1	0.0	31.7	50.0	31.1
	Most times	45.8	23.1	47.1	42.9	14.3	66.7	46.0	33.3	46.2
	Always	10.5	0.0	11.6	7.1	0.0	16.7	10.8	0.0	11.4
	Other	8.5	23.1	7.2	14.3	28.6	0.0	7.9	16.7	7.6
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	8.5	90.2	4.7	50.0	42.9	47.0	4.3	95.0

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they have observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Overall, respondents are fairly divided as to whether a more senior officer knows of the observed bullying target's sense of being bullied 'rarely' or 'most times', with the CFA favouring 'rarely' (48.3% vs 37.8%) and the MFB favouring 'most times' (31.4% vs 45.8%). MFB respondents are twice as inclined (10.5% vs 4.2%) to report more senior staff 'always' know. A larger proportion of female staff (55%) than male staff (38.7%) in both agencies consider that it is rare for a more senior officer to know a person feels they are being bullied.

Table 102b presents responses for the 'Other' option to the question.

Tables 103 and 104 presents responses according to length of service and age category, which do not show any clear associations, other than that the proportions stay fairly consistent.

Table 102b Observer opinion of a more senior officer's awareness of bullying occurring
– 'Other' responses

"Other" responses.[Of those who observed bullying:] In your opinion, how often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?	
1	unsure
2	They dont want to know. Stick their head in the sand
3	They created the problem and knew what would happen
4	The executive know that it is going on but because they are a part of it they do nothing about it.
5	The biggest issue here is that management are hypocrites. They claim they are the victims, while they slander, lie, and hurt their employees.
6	Sometimes.
7	Sometimes
8	senior management, ceo and board made aware of some
9	often the senior officer been the Senior station officer is also been bullied by volunteers and the media
10	NOT SURE WHAT THE QUESTION MEANS
11	Not sure if they know but prefer to bury their heads in the sand
12	In some cases it is the senior person doing the bullying
13	In my experience as a senior manager it is highly dependant on the level of confidence/integrity the manager is regarded
14	Hard to say, but probably
15	dont know
16	dont know
17	Difficult to answer
18	At station level frank discussion usually brings to notice
19	As career FF's i believe they themselves are also being bullied by upper managment.
20	managment are doing the bullying

Table 103 Observer opinion of a more senior officer's awareness of bullying occurring – by length of service

In your opinion, how often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Never	4.4	0.0	3.4	6.9	4.6	4.8	14.3	2.2	2.8	4.3
	Rarely	39.5	38.5	27.6	34.5	35.4	40.5	64.3	51.1	38.9	34.8
	Most times	41.9	53.8	62.1	37.9	40.0	40.5	21.4	28.9	47.2	52.2
	Always	7.4	0.0	6.9	10.3	10.8	7.1	0.0	6.7	5.6	8.7
	Other	6.8	7.7	0.0	10.3	9.2	7.1	0.0	11.1	5.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.4	9.8	9.8	22.0	14.2	4.7	15.2	12.2	7.8
CFA	Never	4.9	0.0	10.0	0.0	7.9	3.4	8.3	7.1	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	48.3	45.5	30.0	53.8	36.8	44.8	75.0	64.3	45.5	80.0
	Most times	37.8	45.5	50.0	30.8	42.1	37.9	16.7	28.6	54.5	20.0
	Always	4.2	0.0	10.0	0.0	7.9	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	4.9	9.1	0.0	15.4	5.3	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	7.7	7.0	9.1	26.6	20.3	8.4	9.8	7.7	3.5
MFB	Never	3.9	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	7.7	50.0	0.0	4.0	5.6
	Rarely	31.4	0.0	26.3	18.8	33.3	30.8	0.0	45.2	36.0	22.2
	Most times	45.8	100.0	68.4	43.8	37.0	46.2	50.0	29.0	44.0	61.1
	Always	10.5	0.0	5.3	18.8	14.8	7.7	0.0	9.7	8.0	11.1
	Other	8.5	0.0	0.0	6.3	14.8	7.7	0.0	16.1	8.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	1.3	12.4	10.5	17.6	8.5	1.3	20.3	16.3	11.8

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 104 Observer opinion of a more senior officer's awareness of bullying occurring – by age group

[Of those who observed bullying:] In your opinion, how often is a more senior officer aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents who observed bullying	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Never	4.4	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.9	5.1	7.8	3.5	11.1
	Rarely	39.5	100.0	43.8	30.8	35.1	31.4	41.0	45.1	45.6	38.9
	Most times	41.9	0.0	50.0	50.0	45.9	49.0	38.5	27.5	43.9	38.9
	Always	7.4	0.0	6.3	0.0	10.8	9.8	12.8	3.9	5.3	11.1
	Other	6.8	0.0	0.0	15.4	8.1	5.9	2.6	15.7	1.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.3	5.4	8.8	12.5	17.2	13.2	17.2	19.3	6.1
CFA	Never	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	8.7	15.0	5.3	0.0
	Rarely	48.3	100.0	46.2	50.0	42.1	37.9	52.2	50.0	52.6	80.0
	Most times	37.8	0.0	46.2	28.6	42.1	48.3	30.4	30.0	42.1	20.0
	Always	4.2	0.0	7.7	0.0	5.3	3.4	8.7	5.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	4.9	0.0	0.0	21.4	10.5	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	0.7	9.1	9.8	13.3	20.3	16.1	14.0	13.3	3.5
MFB	Never	3.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	4.5	0.0	3.2	2.6	15.4
	Rarely	31.4	0.0	33.3	8.3	27.8	22.7	25.0	41.9	42.1	23.1
	Most times	45.8	0.0	66.7	75.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	25.8	44.7	46.2
	Always	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	18.2	18.8	3.2	7.9	15.4
	Other	8.5	0.0	0.0	8.3	5.6	4.5	6.3	25.8	2.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	0.0	2.0	7.8	11.8	14.4	10.5	20.3	24.8	8.5

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.3.6 Staff perception of the awareness of senior management

Question 32 sought from staff who have observed bullying:

In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied? (Mark only one oval)

- Never
- Rarely
- Most times
- Always
- Other: _____

From Table 105 we see that the predominant view of males (44.9%) and females (55%) is that senior management are rarely aware of specific cases of bullying occurring, with the view more pronounced in the CFA than the MFB. A sizeable proportion of staff (27%) are nevertheless of the view that senior managers know ‘most times’, a view embraced by proportionally more non-operational staff (38.4%) than career firefighters (28.7%) in both services. 13.5% of staff thought they were never aware, and 8.5% that they were always aware.

Conflating responses into ‘never / rarely’ and ‘most times / always’, in every cohort but female firefighters, the CFA staff are significantly more inclined than MFB staff to believe that senior management are never or rarely aware of a staff member feeling bullied. Table 105b presents responses of respondents selecting ‘Other’ in the questionnaire, while Tables 106 and 107 report responses in relation to length of service and age without discernible trends.

Table 105 Observer opinion of senior management awareness of bullying occurring – by service gender and role

[Of those who observed bullying:]In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Never	13.5	5.0	13.9	12.9	0.0	15.0	13.6	10.0	13.8
	Rarely	45.3	55.0	44.9	45.2	60.0	40.0	45.3	50.0	45.3
	Most times	27.0	30.0	27.0	38.7	30.0	45.0	25.7	30.0	25.6
	Always	8.4	5.0	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	10.0	9.4
	Other	5.7	5.0	5.5	3.2	10.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	5.9
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	6.8	92.6	10.5	32.3	64.5	89.5	3.8	95.8
CFA	Never	11.2	0.0	11.8	11.8	0.0	14.3	11.1	0.0	11.5
	Rarely	56.6	71.4	55.9	52.9	100.0	42.9	57.1	50.0	57.4
	Most times	25.2	14.3	25.7	35.3	0.0	42.9	23.8	25.0	23.8
	Always	4.9	14.3	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	25.0	4.9
	Other	2.1	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.5
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	4.9	95.1	11.9	17.6	82.4	88.1	3.2	96.8
MFB	Never	15.7	7.7	15.9	14.3	0.0	16.7	15.8	16.7	15.9
	Rarely	34.6	46.2	34.1	35.7	42.9	33.3	34.5	50.0	34.1
	Most times	28.8	38.5	28.3	42.9	42.9	50.0	27.3	33.3	27.3
	Always	11.8	0.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.9	0.0	13.6
	Other	9.2	7.7	8.7	7.1	14.3	0.0	9.4	0.0	9.1
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	8.5	90.2	9.2	50.0	42.9	90.8	4.3	95.0

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 105b Observer opinion of senior management awareness of bullying occurring – ‘Other’ responses

[Of those who observed bullying:]In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied?	
1	When senior management is the perpetrator
2	They don't seek to assess their own bullying
3	They don't care
4	they are the culprits
5	They are bullying/Intimidating lower ranks
6	They are aware of it, they have to be, because they refuse to visit, or meet with their workforce. There are countless emails sent to various members of the hierarchy expressing the employees thoughts and
7	Sometimes
8	Only when formalised or there is a personal connection
9	Not sure if they want to know
10	NOT SURE
11	Have found management dismissive if taken to task
12	Hard to say, but probably
13	dont know
14	dont know
15	Direct manager (Officer or commander often know)
16	(Blank)
17	(Blank)

Table 106 Observer opinion of senior management awareness of bullying occurring – by length of service

[Of those who observed bullying:]In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Never	13.5	0.0	24.1	17.2	12.3	11.9	28.6	11.1	11.1	8.7
	Rarely	45.3	61.5	37.9	44.8	41.5	45.2	57.1	46.7	52.8	34.8
	Most times	27.0	30.8	31.0	13.8	30.8	26.2	14.3	22.2	27.8	43.5
	Always	8.4	0.0	3.4	20.7	12.3	7.1	0.0	6.7	5.6	8.7
	Other	5.7	7.7	3.4	3.4	3.1	9.5	0.0	13.3	2.8	4.3
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.4	9.8	9.8	22.0	14.2	4.7	15.2	12.2	7.8
CFA	Never	11.2	0.0	20.0	7.7	13.2	6.9	25.0	14.3	0.0	20.0
	Rarely	56.6	63.6	50.0	69.2	44.7	51.7	66.7	57.1	81.8	60.0
	Most times	25.2	27.3	30.0	7.7	31.6	31.0	8.3	28.6	18.2	20.0
	Always	4.9	0.0	0.0	15.4	7.9	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	2.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	2.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	7.7	7.0	9.1	26.6	20.3	8.4	9.8	7.7	3.5
MFB	Never	15.7	0.0	26.3	25.0	11.1	23.1	50.0	9.7	16.0	5.6
	Rarely	34.6	50.0	31.6	25.0	37.0	30.8	0.0	41.9	40.0	27.8
	Most times	28.8	50.0	31.6	18.8	29.6	15.4	50.0	19.4	32.0	50.0
	Always	11.8	0.0	5.3	25.0	18.5	7.7	0.0	9.7	8.0	11.1
	Other	9.2	0.0	5.3	6.3	3.7	23.1	0.0	19.4	4.0	5.6
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	1.3	12.4	10.5	17.6	8.5	1.3	20.3	16.3	11.8

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 107 Observer opinion of senior management awareness of bullying occurring – by age group

[Of those who observed bullying:]In your opinion, how often is senior management aware that the person feels they are being bullied?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Never	13.5	0.0	18.8	23.1	5.4	7.8	15.4	19.6	12.3	11.1
	Rarely	45.3	100.0	43.8	34.6	48.6	47.1	48.7	43.1	47.4	38.9
	Most times	27.0	0.0	25.0	26.9	24.3	31.4	17.9	21.6	33.3	38.9
	Always	8.4	0.0	6.3	7.7	13.5	11.8	12.8	2.0	5.3	11.1
	Other	5.7	0.0	6.3	7.7	8.1	2.0	5.1	13.7	1.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.3	5.4	8.8	12.5	17.2	13.2	17.2	19.3	6.1
CFA	Never	11.2	0.0	15.4	14.3	5.3	6.9	13.0	20.0	5.3	20.0
	Rarely	56.6	100.0	46.2	50.0	57.9	51.7	60.9	65.0	57.9	60.0
	Most times	25.2	0.0	30.8	21.4	26.3	34.5	13.0	15.0	36.8	20.0
	Always	4.9	0.0	7.7	7.1	5.3	3.4	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other	2.1	0.0	0.0	7.1	5.3	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	0.7	9.1	9.8	13.3	20.3	16.1	14.0	13.3	3.5
MFB	Never	15.7	0.0	33.3	33.3	5.6	9.1	18.8	19.4	15.8	7.7
	Rarely	34.6	0.0	33.3	16.7	38.9	40.9	31.3	29.0	42.1	30.8
	Most times	28.8	0.0	0.0	33.3	22.2	27.3	25.0	25.8	31.6	46.2
	Always	11.8	0.0	0.0	8.3	22.2	22.7	12.5	3.2	7.9	15.4
	Other	9.2	0.0	33.3	8.3	11.1	0.0	12.5	22.6	2.6	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	0.0	2.0	7.8	11.8	14.4	10.5	20.3	24.8	8.5

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.3.7 Observer's perception of a fair formal reporting process.

In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint? (Select only one).

- Yes
- No
- Neutral / I have no opinion
- Other:

Question 33 asked of respondents who had observed bullying:

Table 108 indicates that overall, only 16.9% of respondents who had observed bullying believed a fair formal reporting process was in place to hear a bullying complaint, while 48.3% of respondents believed not. 27% were neutral on the subject. These proportions are fairly consistently maintained among men and women, and between non-operational and firefighter staff. In terms of length of service (Table 109), staff with less than 3 years service were the most neutral (61.5%) with none reporting they believed a fair formal process is in place. Comments in Table 108b suggest that a fair formal process is in place that is not properly administered, in which staff have little confidence to use for fear of negative repercussions if they do.

Table 108 Observers of bullying opinion on the fairness of the reporting process by gender and role

[Of those who observed bullying]In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All respondents	Females	Males	All non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both services	Yes	16.9	15.0	16.8	16.1	20.0	10.0	17.0	10.0	17.3
	No	48.3	40.0	49.3	51.6	30.0	65.0	47.9	50.0	48.0
	Neutral / no opinion	27.0	25.0	27.4	16.1	30.0	10.0	28.3	20.0	28.7
	Other	7.8	20.0	6.6	16.1	20.0	15.0	6.8	20.0	5.9
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	6.8	92.6	10.5	32.3	64.5	89.5	3.8	95.8
CFA	Yes	13.3	14.3	13.2	11.8	0.0	14.3	13.5	25.0	13.1
	No	51.7	42.9	52.2	64.7	66.7	64.3	50.0	25.0	50.8
	Neutral / no opinion	26.6	28.6	26.5	17.6	33.3	14.3	27.8	25.0	27.9
	Other	8.4	14.3	8.1	5.9	0.0	7.1	8.7	25.0	8.2
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	4.9	95.1	11.9	17.6	82.4	88.1	3.2	96.8
MFB	Yes	20.3	15.4	20.3	21.4	28.6	0.0	20.1	0.0	21.2
	No	45.1	38.5	46.4	35.7	14.3	66.7	46.0	66.7	45.5
	Neutral / no opinion	27.5	23.1	28.3	14.3	28.6	0.0	28.8	16.7	29.5
	Other	7.2	23.1	5.1	28.6	28.6	33.3	5.0	16.7	3.8
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	8.5	90.2	9.2	50.0	42.9	90.8	4.3	95.0

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 108b Observers of bullying opinion on the fairness of the reporting process
– ‘Other’ responses

[Of those who observed bullying:]In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?	
1	yes there is but often the fall out from making a formal complaint makes it harder for a person to work in that environment
2	yes but not utilised
3	Who knows what the process is. The one we have leads no where and doesn't seem independant.
4	There's a system but no one capable or trained to do so.
5	There is one. It is probematic, appears unsupportive and not considered to make 'hard calls'...the problem (person) is moved not adressed is a common perception
6	there is a process, not always followed
7	There is a process but senior mangement are the bulllys here
8	The system is fair - the culture is one where the system isn't allowed to be run and people are too scared and feel it won't be successful (so many people who should have lost their job for violence/intimidation/bullying didn't - people don't trust the risk of raising a complaint will get any outcome worth the effort and pain
9	The process is in place but it rarely gets you anywhere as bullying is very difficult to prove
10	The process if fine, but the reality of the complaint is that when people find out there has been a complaint (and they will!) it leads to more
11	Probably, but I would be loathe to use it in the current climate & against senior management who play a large role in deciding my fate within the organisation.
12	its in place but you dont dare use it because your not a fire fighter who have more protection.
13	it is so unbalanced towards volunteers
14	It is random,
15	It is adequate but confidentiality is sometimes vital and does not always work with the designated officer .
16	I think on paper the process is fair. It just never works out that way
17	I have no confidence in the CFA reporting proccess
18	i am aware of one instance when he ceo and board were advised and nothing has been done. on other occasion i feel the mfb sweep things under the carpet, do not protect the bullied but more so protect the
19	how are the employees expected to report their grievances to the people that are the cause of their anxieties?
20	bullying is one sided if a complaint is lodged about an executive then it is swept under the carpet. They are a protected species
21	Against colleagues yes, against volunteers no.
22	a process in place but people fear of retribution
23	A formal process is in place that always seeks local level resolution.

Table 109 Observers of bullying opinion on the fairness of the reporting process – by length of service

[Of those who observed bullying]In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 - 15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both services	Yes	16.9	0.0	24.1	6.9	20.0	16.7	7.1	24.4	16.7	13.0
	No	48.3	23.1	37.9	51.7	52.3	59.5	35.7	42.2	52.8	52.2
	Neutral / no opinion	27.0	61.5	31.0	31.0	20.0	14.3	50.0	31.1	22.2	26.1
	Other	7.8	15.4	6.9	10.3	7.7	9.5	7.1	2.2	8.3	8.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	4.4	9.8	9.8	22.0	14.2	4.7	15.2	12.2	7.8
CFA	Yes	13.3	0.0	30.0	0.0	18.4	17.2	8.3	14.3	9.1	0.0
	No	51.7	27.3	30.0	53.8	57.9	65.5	41.7	57.1	45.5	40.0
	Neutral / no opinion	26.6	63.6	30.0	30.8	18.4	10.3	50.0	28.6	27.3	20.0
	Other	8.4	9.1	10.0	15.4	5.3	6.9	0.0	0.0	18.2	40.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	7.7	7.0	9.1	26.6	20.3	8.4	9.8	7.7	3.5
MFB	Yes	20.3	0.0	21.1	12.5	22.2	15.4	0.0	29.0	20.0	16.7
	No	45.1	0.0	42.1	50.0	44.4	46.2	0.0	35.5	56.0	55.6
	Neutral / no opinion	27.5	50.0	31.6	31.3	22.2	23.1	50.0	32.3	20.0	27.8
	Other	7.2	50.0	5.3	6.3	11.1	15.4	50.0	3.2	4.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	1.3	12.4	10.5	17.6	8.5	1.3	20.3	16.3	11.8

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they have observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 110 Observers of bullying opinion on the fairness of the reporting process – by age group

[Of those who observed bullying]In your opinion, is a fair formal reporting process in place within the employing organisation to hear a bullying complaint?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both services	Yes	16.9	0.0	12.5	15.4	16.2	19.6	15.4	11.8	22.8	16.7
	No	48.3	0.0	37.5	50.0	40.5	49.0	56.4	52.9	47.4	44.4
	Neutral / no opinion	27.0	100.0	43.8	23.1	32.4	25.5	23.1	27.5	24.6	22.2
	Other	7.8	0.0	6.3	11.5	10.8	5.9	5.1	7.8	5.3	16.7
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	0.3	5.4	8.8	12.5	17.2	13.2	17.2	19.3	6.1
CFA	Yes	13.3	0.0	7.7	21.4	10.5	17.2	17.4	10.0	10.5	0.0
	No	51.7	0.0	30.8	64.3	42.1	51.7	60.9	60.0	52.6	40.0
	Neutral / no opinion	26.6	100.0	53.8	14.3	31.6	20.7	17.4	30.0	26.3	20.0
	Other	8.4	0.0	7.7	0.0	15.8	10.3	4.3	0.0	10.5	40.0
	Cohort as % of total	48.3	0.7	9.1	9.8	13.3	20.3	16.1	14.0	13.3	3.5
MFB	Yes	20.3	0.0	33.3	8.3	22.2	22.7	12.5	12.9	28.9	23.1
	No	45.1	0.0	66.7	33.3	38.9	45.5	50.0	48.4	44.7	46.2
	Neutral / no opinion	27.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	31.8	31.3	25.8	23.7	23.1
	Other	7.2	0.0	0.0	25.0	5.6	0.0	6.3	12.9	2.6	7.7
	Cohort as % of total	51.7	0.0	2.0	7.8	11.8	14.4	10.5	20.3	24.8	8.5

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.3.8 What caused the bullying to stop?

Q.34: In considering the cases of bullying you are aware of, what made the bullying stop? (you can choose more than 1) * Check all that apply.

- It didn't stop
- The target of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)
- The perpetrator of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)
- Effective intervention by management
- Other:

Observers of bullying were asked to reflect on how the cases they were aware of were resolved. Table 111 shows that the largest proportion of respondents overall (38.1%), in each fire service, and of males, indicated that the matter they observed did not resolve. Females are proportionally more inclined to report that the target left or resigned (46.7%) than are males (21.8%). Only 3.3% of females and 6.2% of males responded that the matter was resolved through effective intervention by management. Roughly 20% of respondents (male/female, non-operational/firefighter, CFA, MFB) fairly consistently express the view that the bully left (moved elsewhere) or resigned.

Table 111 Observers of bullying: their opinion as to what caused the bullying to stop - by gender & role

In considering the cases of bullying you are aware of, what made the bullying stop? (you can choose more than 1)		Causes for bullying stopping	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-Operational females	Non-Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	It didn't stop	38.1	20.0	40.0	37.8	29.4	44.4	38.2	7.7	39.6
	The target of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	23.7	46.7	21.8	26.7	41.2	18.5	23.3	53.8	22.0
	The perpetrator of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	20.0	23.3	19.7	26.7	23.5	29.6	19.1	23.1	18.8
	Effective intervention by management	6.4	3.3	6.2	6.7	5.9	3.7	6.4	0.0	6.4
	Other	11.7	6.7	12.4	2.2	0.0	3.7	13.0	15.4	13.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	8.0	90.7	12.0	37.8	60.0	88.0	3.9	94.8
CFA	It didn't stop	37.5	18.2	38.7	44.0	33.3	47.4	36.5	0.0	37.7
	The target of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	26.6	54.5	24.9	28.0	50.0	21.1	26.4	60.0	25.3
	The perpetrator of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	20.1	18.2	20.2	28.0	16.7	31.6	18.9	20.0	18.8
	Effective intervention by management	4.3	0.0	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.2
	Other	11.4	9.1	11.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.2	20.0	13.0
	Cohort as % of total	49.1	6.0	94.0	13.6	24.0	76.0	86.4	3.1	96.9
MFB	It didn't stop	38.7	21.1	41.3	30.0	27.3	37.5	39.8	12.5	41.5
	The target of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	20.9	42.1	18.6	25.0	36.4	12.5	20.5	50.0	18.9
	The perpetrator of the bullying left (resigned or transferred)	19.9	26.3	19.2	25.0	27.3	25.0	19.3	25.0	18.9
	Effective intervention by management	8.4	5.3	7.8	15.0	9.1	12.5	7.6	0.0	7.5
	Other	12.0	5.3	13.2	5.0	0.0	12.5	12.9	12.5	13.2
	Cohort as % of total	50.9	9.9	87.4	10.5	55.0	40.0	89.5	4.7	93.0

Note: sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying provided 375 suggestions as to how the bullying resolved. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 111b provides a matrix relating entries under ‘Other’ as to why the observed bullying stopped to the context of the bullying issue the respondent had observed.

Table 111b Matrix of ‘Other’ reasons why observed bullying stopped, grouped in relation to instigator / issue.

Other reasons why observed bullying stopped	Total Other reasons	IR / Political conflict	Senior management	Poor personal behavior among peers	volunteer	abuse of supervisor authority
Not stopped	6.7	0.0	10.5	0.0	12.5	0.0
Perpetrator left	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
Perpetrator feared exposure	6.7	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	14.3
Target moved	6.7	0.0	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Target stood up to bully	6.7	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	28.6
Target ignored it	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
Industrial /political situation abated	11.1	33.3	15.8	0.0	12.5	0.0
Cases in various tribunals	2.2	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Chief Officer / Board	4.4	0.0	5.3	0.0	12.5	0.0
People moved / promoted	4.4	33.3	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Target capitulated	6.7	0.0	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Short lived solved by Roster change	4.4	33.3	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
Others intervened	13.3	0.0	0.0	37.5	12.5	28.6
UFU Intervention	8.9	0.0	10.5	12.5	12.5	0.0
Time	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	14.3
Unclear	6.7	0.0	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as % of total	100.0	6.7	42.2	17.8	17.8	15.6

Note: Sample comprises 296 respondents (20 female, 274 male, 2 non-gender specific) who reported that they observed bullying, provided 44 ‘other’ suggestions as to how the bullying resolved. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

5.4 Discussion of data on bullying

5.4.1 The degree of trust in the system

Protecting the psychological well-being of a workforce is an important responsibility for all employers, and we possibly have a right to expect an even higher standard of care from public sector organisations, particularly those of such importance to the community as the Victorian fire services. We expect them to uphold the highest standards in terms of the occupational health and safety and respect for the human rights and dignity of their employees.

While comparisons with other workplaces are difficult to make, owing to differences in the methodologies adopted in different studies and the circumstances in which they are conducted, we can say that a significant number of staff feel they have experienced bullying during the course of their employment in the Victorian fire services.

In this survey of 885 (29% of) UFU members, 604 (68%) said they had not been bullied in their careers, and 281 (31.8%) said they had. It is noteworthy that 78% of non-operational staff respondents said they had been bullied compared to 29.5% of firefighter respondents. Overall, male and female firefighters report similar levels (29.3% and 30.3% respectively) while slightly more non-operational male respondents (80.8) report being bullied than females (78.6%).

Given that bullying, particularly in its more covert forms, is difficult to prove, and because we are not in a position to precisely determine what each respondent considers ‘bullying’ (except in a

general sense), the main conclusion we can draw from this is that these staff believe they have experienced some form of workplace aggression during the course of their careers, that may be technically defined as bullying, or possibly not.

If we apply the oft-used minimum 6 month duration criteria and focus on bullying that is currently occurring, which eliminates purely historical experiences and other short-lived forms of workplace aggression, 11.5% of these staff are reporting current significant hostile behaviour, possibly bullying, again with non-operational respondents claiming more (39%) than firefighter respondents (10.2%). 50% of non-operational females report bullying that conforms to this criteria compared with 3% of career firefighter females.

When we again consider a looser, non-time-defined definition of bullying, and consider the relationship of the primary perpetrators to the person experiencing the behaviour (Table 64a), the most significant source of the bullying experienced by both male (38.4%) and female (33.3%) respondents were senior managers and members of the executive. They account for 46.9% of the bullying claimed by non-operational staff, and 36.9% of that experienced by firefighters. Observers of bullying also cite them as the most significant cohort of perpetrators (31%) (Table 94), particularly in relation to the MFB (42%) (Table 96).

When we consider the perpetrators of bullying as per the tighter definition (Table 67a), senior managers account for 59.8% of the bullying staff are currently experiencing for more than 6 months, comprising 50% of the bullying females experience and 60.9% of that experienced by males. Senior managers and executives currently perpetrate the most bullying (37.5%) of non-operational staff and of firefighters (64%).

Two extremely different definitions, one very loose, one very tight, applied to what the respondents of this survey have recorded, produce the same most common perpetrators.

When asked why they thought they were targeted for bullying, by the broader bullying definition (Table 68), staff who felt they had been bullied (as a whole) prioritised industrial relations tactics, being a union member and being a career firefighter as the top three reasons for being targeted. The first two inevitably relating to their dealings with senior management. Women placed a higher priority on gender discrimination as the prime source of their bullying, with industrial relations and being in a union their equal second choice. Applying the 'current bullying for more than six months' filter on the data (Table 72), non-operational females continue to see gender discrimination as the main reason, while firefighters (there is only one female firefighter who reported bullying that conforms to the tighter definition) cite the same top three reasons, prioritising 'for being a union member'. In free text comments, observers of bullying say, more often than other reasons, the victims were primarily targeted because they were unionists (14.7%), because they were career firefighters (14.5%) and as an industrial relations tactic (7.5%) (Table 98a).

Although senior managers and executives are most commonly identified as perpetrators of bullying by respondents to this study, many others including fellow staff and volunteers are also mentioned by staff when reflecting on the entirety of their careers. Highly experienced staff refer to the bellicose nature of some of the trainers they encountered during their recruitment training, some continue to express their outrage, decades after the event, of hazing rituals they witnessed, and the fact that the perpetrators were never disciplined for what they did. Some raise similar questions about the violence done to many of them by the wilful recklessness of senior managers who ignored and denied the toxic pollution at Fiskville training centre, which has left a generation of firefighters with raised concentrations of carcinogenic toxins in their blood¹.

¹ Even now, 11 years after the first presumptive legislation (that enabled firefighters with cancers caused by their work to gain access to the worker's compensation system) was introduced into the Victorian parliament by the Greens, and blocked on parliamentary procedural grounds, neither major party has introduced such legislation despite having ample time in office to do so.

A continuing theme in the experiences of these people is the lack of justice shown to themselves and others, which relates to the procedural fairness of the governance processes in place to deal with this issue. 79% of respondents who felt they had been bullied made no formal complaint about it, and of those that did, non-operational staff were proportionally more likely to do so than firefighters, and females more likely to formally complain than males (Table 75). Bullied CFA firefighters were roughly twice as likely (24.2%) to formally complain than their MFB counterparts (12.8%). 72% of observers of bullying say those bullied rarely make a complaint, and 17.2% said they never do (Table 99).

When asked if they were confident that a fair formal reporting process was in place to hear a bullying complaint, 69.4% of respondents said they were not, and 23.5% were neutral on the subject (Table 78). Only 7.1% of respondents who had experienced bullying said they were confident that a fair formal reporting process was in place. 14.3% females were confident compared to 6.6% of males, and non-operational staff were roughly twice as confident (12.5%) than career firefighters (6.4%). Observers of bullying were generally more confident, with 16.9% believing a fair formal process was in place, with MFB observers (20%) more confident than those of the CFA (13.3%) (Table 108).

When asked who they *did* inform about the bullying, of the list provided the least consulted were the human resources departments (5.1%), with more female firefighters (11.8%) who experienced bullying consulting them than male firefighters (3.3%). Male firefighters were more likely to inform their union (17.2%) than were females (5.9%). More firefighters place confidence in their immediate supervisors (22%) than do non-operational staff (12.1%) while both informed trusted co-workers most of all (41.7%).

20.5% of respondents reporting bullying state that their senior manager interceded in the case, to the detriment of 5%, the benefit of 8.5% and with no impact on 12.1% (Table 84). Following a formal complaint they interceded in 37.3% of cases, to the detriment of 11.9%, the benefit of 5.1%, and with no impact on 20.3% (Table 87).

When we asked those who made a formal complaint whether or not they agreed with the statement 'my complaint was fairly considered and I am satisfied with the outcome' 83% disagreed with it, 10.2% agreed with, and 6.8% were neutral. CFA staff were slightly more positive than MFB staff, and Females disagreed more adamantly than males.

These observations reinforce the impression of a workforce that perceives those in charge and the organisational elements over which they have control (eg., HR departments) as largely anathema to their well-being: of little help and potentially detrimental. They do not view the formal processes that are in place to deal with bullying and similar issues to be fair, and a significant majority of those that have ventured to use them are dissatisfied with the results. This is consistent with the perspective expressed throughout the survey, and to the 2015 Fire Services Review, that the majority of the workforce distrust the senior management of their organisations.

With the current state of morale and strategic and operational leadership, the fire services appear to be in an extremely unhealthy state; a situation that must not be allowed to continue. There has been a fundamental collapse in trust and goodwill. (O'Byrne, 2016: 2).

This suggests two policy options moving forward:

- Provide the workforce with a senior management they can trust.
- Provide a totally independent and adequately resourced professional conduct review and monitoring board to formally adjudicate issues of workplace aggression, with the power to order the disciplining of staff, senior managers, and volunteers in the case of the CFA.

Workplace bullying is a complex problem, requiring highly skilled adjudication, sensitive to its covert forms, and fair, tactful intervention. A senior management that is overwhelmingly perceived to be the most frequent source of the bullying, and to be less than helpful when they otherwise intercede, cannot be entrusted with overseeing how these organisations and their institutions manage these issues.

6. Sexual Harassment

6.1 Definitions

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 defines sexual harassment thus:

- (1) For the purpose of this Act, a person sexually harasses another person if he or she-
 - (a) makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person; or
 - (b) engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person - in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.
- (2) In subsection (1) *conduct of a sexual nature* includes-
 - (a) subjecting a person to any act of physical intimacy;
 - (b) making, orally or in writing, any remark or statement with sexual connotations to a person or about a person in his or her presence;
 - (c) making any gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature in a person's presence.

6.2 Exposure to potentially sexually harassing behaviours

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour, which makes a reasonable person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Sexual harassment is not interaction, flirtation or friendship which is mutual or consensual.

Though predominantly directed at women, men can also be sexually harassed.

39. Has another fire service employee offended, humiliated or intimidated you by:

Question 39 of the survey was preceded by a simple explanatory statement:

Respondents were asked to choose between 'never', 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to a series of behaviours listed in materials from the Australian Human Rights Commission on identification of sexual harassment, namely:

- staring or leering;
- unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching;
- suggestive comments or jokes;
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- intrusive questions or statements about your private life;
- displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature;
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites;
- requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates;
- behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications (AHRC, 2016).

Their responses to each of these propositions are presented in Tables 112 – 122. No time limit was placed on the period to which these accounts refer, so they extend back 30 years in some cases. One male CFA firefighter in his 60's responded to have 'frequently' experienced the behaviour cited in all questions, and while the data stands we suspect that his response was an expression of irritation at being asked the questions.

Table 112 reports that 4.4% of staff report being subject to staring or leering once or twice in their period of employment, including 17% of female respondents and 3.7% of male respondents. Proportionally more non-operational staff report experiencing the behaviour 'once or twice' than firefighters (14.6% vs 3.9%), with female non-operational staff reporting higher levels than female firefighters (35.7% vs 9.1%). Non-operational and firefighter males report similar levels (3.8 / 3.7%). While one CFA female firefighter has experienced the behaviour 'frequently', the remaining 91.7% of CFA female firefighter respondents report never experiencing the behaviour. Half the non-operational female respondents with the CFA report experiencing the behaviour 'once or twice'. 20% of non-operational staff report experiencing the behaviour 'once or twice' compared to 2.8% of MFB firefighters, which includes the 14.3% of MFB female firefighters reporting experience of the behaviour 'once or twice' in their careers.

Table 112 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (staring and leering) by service, gender and role

Staring or leering at you		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	95.1	80.9	96.0	85.4	64.3	96.2	95.6	87.9	96.0
	Once or twice	4.4	17.0	3.7	14.6	35.7	3.8	3.9	9.1	3.7
	Frequently	0.5	2.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	3.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	93.3	77.8	94.1	88.5	50.0	100.0	93.6	91.7	93.7
	Once or twice	5.9	16.7	5.4	11.5	50.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	5.7
	Frequently	0.8	5.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	8.3	0.6
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	96.5	82.8	97.5	80.0	75.0	83.3	97.0	85.7	97.7
	Once or twice	3.3	17.2	2.5	20.0	25.0	16.7	2.8	14.3	2.3
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 113 presents responses to the question in relation to 'unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching'. 2.3% of staff overall report experiencing this behaviour, including 17% of female respondents and 1.3% of male respondents. Proportionally more non-operational staff experienced this 'once or twice' (7.3%) than did firefighters (2%), with non-operational female staff (14.3%) reporting less than female firefighters (18.2%). 3% of female firefighters (all located within the MFB) report this has been a frequent occurrence as do 7.1% of non-operational females (located in the CFA). More CFA female firefighters (91.7%) have 'never' experienced the behaviour than is reported by MFB female firefighters (71.4%), 23.8% of whom experienced it 'once or twice', and 4.8% 'frequently'. MFB non-operational staff report not experiencing the behaviour while 33.3% of CFA female non-operational staff report experiencing it 'once or twice' and 16.7% 'frequently'.

Table 113 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (unnecessary familiarity) by service, gender and role.

Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	97.3	78.7	98.6	90.2	78.6	100.0	97.6	78.8	98.5
	Once or twice	2.3	17.0	1.3	7.3	14.3	0.0	2.0	18.2	1.4
	Frequently	0.5	4.3	0.1	2.4	7.1	0.0	0.4	3.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	96.5	77.8	97.5	88.5	50.0	100.0	97.1	91.7	97.3
	Once or twice	3.0	16.7	2.3	7.7	33.3	0.0	2.6	8.3	2.4
	Frequently	0.5	5.6	0.3	3.8	16.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	97.9	79.3	99.4	93.3	100.0	100.0	98.0	71.4	99.4
	Once or twice	1.8	17.2	0.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	1.6	23.8	0.6
	Frequently	0.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	4.8	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 114 reports respondents' experience of exposure to suggestive comments or jokes that offended, humiliated or intimidated them. 8.1% indicate this has happened 'once or twice', incorporating 21.3% of females and 7.4% of males. Twice the proportion (14.6%) of non-operational respondents have experienced this 'once or twice' compared with firefighters (7.8%), with 4.9% of non-operational staff reporting it to occur 'frequently' compared to 0.6% of firefighters. Similar proportions of non-operational females (21.4%) and firefighter females (21.2%) have experienced this behaviour 'once or twice', while 'frequently' is reported by 14.3% of non-operational females compared to 6.1% of female firefighters. 9.5% of female firefighters in the MFB have experienced it frequently compared to none in the CFA. 27.8% of CFA females (all staff) report experiencing the behaviour 'once or twice', compared to 17.2% in the MFB.

Table 115 presents the results in relation to 'insults or taunts of a sexual nature'. Overall 3.2% of staff have experienced this once or twice and 0.5% report it to have occurred 'frequently'. Proportionally more females experienced it 'once or twice' (14.9%) than males (2.5%), and proportionally more non-operational staff (7.3%) than firefighters (3%). 4.6% of CFA staff experienced it 'once or twice' compared to 2.1% of MFB staff, with 22.2% of CFA females and 10.3% of MFB females experiencing it 'once or twice'. No female firefighters say they experience it frequently, nor do CFA nonoperational staff, while 12.5% of MFB non-operational females have experienced it frequently.

Table 114 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (suggestive comments, jokes) by service, gender and role

Suggestive comments or jokes		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	91.1	70.2	92.3	80.5	64.3	88.5	91.6	72.7	92.5
	Once or twice	8.1	21.3	7.4	14.6	21.4	11.5	7.8	21.2	7.3
	Frequently	0.8	8.5	0.2	4.9	14.3	0.0	0.6	6.1	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	89.2	66.7	90.4	84.6	50.0	95.0	89.6	75.0	90.1
	Once or twice	10.2	27.8	9.3	11.5	33.3	5.0	10.1	25.0	9.6
	Frequently	0.5	5.6	0.3	3.8	16.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	92.4	72.4	93.8	73.3	75.0	66.7	93.0	71.4	94.1
	Once or twice	6.6	17.2	6.0	20.0	12.5	33.3	6.2	19.0	5.7
	Frequently	1.0	10.3	0.2	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.8	9.5	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 115 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (sexual taunts / insults) by service, gender and role.

Insults or taunts of a sexual nature		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	96.4	83.0	97.2	90.2	71.4	100.0	96.7	87.9	97.2
	Once or twice	3.2	14.9	2.5	7.3	21.4	0.0	3.0	12.1	2.6
	Frequently	0.5	2.1	0.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	94.9	77.8	95.8	88.5	50.0	100.0	95.4	91.7	95.5
	Once or twice	4.6	22.2	3.7	11.5	50.0	0.0	4.1	8.3	3.9
	Frequently	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	97.5	86.2	98.3	93.3	87.5	100.0	97.6	85.7	98.3
	Once or twice	2.1	10.3	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	14.3	1.7
	Frequently	0.4	3.4	0.0	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 116 presents data in relation to the question of ‘intrusive questions or statements about your private life’, which is reported to have occurred ‘once or twice’ by 6.8% of respondents, including 17% of females and 6.2% of males. 8.5% of females report this has occurred ‘frequently’. It is marginally more common for non-operational staff (9.8% of whom experienced it ‘once or twice’ compared to 6.6% of firefighters), although female firefighters experienced it ‘once or twice’ more often (21.2%) than female non-operational staff (7.1%). Proportionally more non-operational females (14.3%) experience it ‘frequently’ compared to firefighter females (6.1%). More females

experience it 'frequently' in the CFA 11.1%) than in the MFB (6.9%), with 33.3% of non-operational CFA females doing so, compared to none in the MFB, whereas 9.5% of MFB female firefighters report frequently experiencing it, compared to no CFA female firefighters. 16.7% of MFB non-operational males report experiencing it 'once or twice' compared to 4.4% of MFB firefighters.

Table 116 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (intrusive questions / statements) by service, gender and role

Intrusive questions or statements about your private life		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	92.3	74.5	93.4	85.4	78.6	88.5	92.7	72.7	93.6
	Once or twice	6.8	17.0	6.2	9.8	7.1	11.5	6.6	21.2	6.1
	Frequently	0.9	8.5	0.4	4.9	14.3	0.0	0.7	6.1	0.4
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	89.8	72.2	90.7	84.6	66.7	90.0	90.1	75.0	90.7
	Once or twice	8.9	16.7	8.5	7.7	0.0	10.0	9.0	25.0	8.4
	Frequently	1.3	11.1	0.8	7.7	33.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	94.2	75.9	95.4	86.7	87.5	83.3	94.4	71.4	95.6
	Once or twice	5.3	17.2	4.6	13.3	12.5	16.7	5.0	19.0	4.4
	Frequently	0.6	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	9.5	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 117 reports respondents offended, humiliated or intimidated by the display of posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature in the workplace. Overall, 95.3% of respondents report never experiencing this including 78.7% of females and 96.3% of males. 90.2% of non-operational staff have never experienced it compared to 95.5% of career firefighters. 12.8% of females have experienced this once or twice (14.3% non-operational, 12.1% firefighters), while 7.1% of non-operational females and 9.1% of female firefighters have experienced it frequently. More MFB female firefighter respondents (14.3%) have the experience 'once or twice' than their CFA counterparts (8.3%).

Table 117 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (displaying images of sexual nature) by service, gender and role

Displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	95.3	78.7	96.3	90.2	78.6	96.2	95.5	78.8	96.3
	Once or twice	4.0	12.8	3.5	7.3	14.3	3.8	3.8	12.1	3.5
	Frequently	0.8	8.5	0.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	0.7	9.1	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	95.7	77.8	96.6	88.5	66.7	95.0	96.2	83.3	96.7
	Once or twice	3.5	11.1	3.1	7.7	16.7	5.0	3.2	8.3	3.0
	Frequently	0.8	11.1	0.3	3.8	16.7	0.0	0.6	8.3	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	94.9	79.3	96.1	93.3	87.5	100.0	95.0	76.2	96.0
	Once or twice	4.3	13.8	3.7	6.7	12.5	0.0	4.2	14.3	3.8
	Frequently	0.8	6.9	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	9.5	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 118 reports responses in relation to receiving ‘sexually explicit emails or text messages’. 93.6% of females and 97.7% of males report never to have been offended, humiliated or intimidated by someone doing so, while 6.4% of females and 2% of males report having been so ‘once or twice’. Non-operational females report no experience of it, while 9.1% of MFB female firefighters, and 8.3% of CFA firefighters have received them ‘once or twice’.

Table 118 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (sexually explicit email/text) by service, gender and role

Someone sending you sexually explicit emails or text messages		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	97.4	93.6	97.7	97.6	100.0	96.2	97.4	90.9	97.8
	Once or twice	2.4	6.4	2.0	2.4	0.0	3.8	2.4	9.1	2.0
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	97.0	94.4	97.2	96.2	100.0	95.0	97.1	91.7	97.3
	Once or twice	2.7	5.6	2.5	3.8	0.0	5.0	2.6	8.3	2.4
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	97.7	93.1	98.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.6	90.5	98.1
	Once or twice	2.1	6.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	9.5	1.7
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 119 reports experience of inappropriate advances on social networking sites, and indicates that 0.6% of respondents, comprising 4.3% of females, and 0.1% of males have experienced such behaviour 'once or twice'. Persons of non-specific gender are the only MFB respondents reporting experience 'once or twice' while 16.7% of CFA female career firefighters report having done so.

Table 119 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (inappropriate advances on social networking sites) by service, gender and role

Inappropriate advances on social networking sites		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-Operational females	Non-Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	99.3	95.7	99.8	97.6	100.0	100.0	99.4	93.9	99.8
	Once or twice	0.6	4.3	0.1	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	6.1	0.1
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	98.9	88.9	99.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.8	83.3	99.4
	Once or twice	0.8	11.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	16.7	0.3
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	99.6	100.0	100.0	93.3	100.0	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0
	Once or twice	0.4	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Frequently	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 120 reports what experience respondents have of people accessing sexually explicit internet sites in their presence, 2.4% have experienced this 'once or twice', comprising 6.4% of female respondents and 2.2% of males. This is not reported by non-operational female staff. 9.1% of female firefighters have experienced this behaviour (8.3% CFA, 9.5% MFB), and 90.9% of female firefighters have not. 2.1% of male firefighters have experienced this.

Table 120 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (accessing sexually explicit websites in respondent's presence) by service, gender and role

People accessing sexually explicit internet sites in your presence		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	97.4	93.6	97.7	97.6	100.0	96.2	97.4	90.9	97.8
	Once or twice	2.4	6.4	2.2	2.4	0.0	3.8	2.4	9.1	2.1
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	96.8	94.4	96.9	96.2	100.0	95.0	96.8	91.7	97.0
	Once or twice	3.0	5.6	2.8	3.8	0.0	5.0	2.9	8.3	2.7
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	97.9	93.1	98.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.8	90.5	98.3
	Once or twice	1.9	6.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	9.5	1.7
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 121 presents data on respondents experiences of requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates. 0.8% of respondents report having experienced this behaviour 'once or twice', including 10.6% of female respondents, and no males. This is reported by 4.9% of nonoperational staff and 0.5% of career staff, including 16.7% of CFA female career firefighters and 9.5% of MFB female career firefighters who responded to the survey.

Table 121 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (requests for sex / dates) by service, gender and role

Requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	99.1	89.4	99.9	95.1	92.9	100.0	99.3	87.9	99.9
	Once or twice	0.8	10.6	0.0	4.9	7.1	0.0	0.6	12.1	0.0
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	99.2	88.9	99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.1	83.3	99.7
	Once or twice	0.5	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	16.7	0.0
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	99.0	89.7	100.0	86.7	87.5	100.0	99.4	90.5	100.0
	Once or twice	1.0	10.3	0.0	13.3	12.5	0.0	0.6	9.5	0.0
	Frequently	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 122 presents data on the issue of whether staff have experienced 'behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications'. While 98.1% of respondents report never to have experienced such behaviour, 8.5% of female respondents say they have experienced it 'once or twice', comprising 7.1% of female non-operational staff and 9.1% of female firefighters. CFA non-operational staff have not experienced it, while 12.5% of MFB non-operational females say they have. 9.5% of MFB female firefighter respondents have experienced it as have 8.3% of CFA female fighters.

Table 122 Experience of potentially sexually harassing behaviour (criminal sexual behaviour) by service, gender and role

Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Never	98.1	91.5	98.6	97.6	92.9	100.0	98.1	90.9	98.5
	Once or twice	1.6	8.5	1.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	1.5	9.1	1.2
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Never	97.3	94.4	97.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.1	91.7	97.3
	Once or twice	2.4	5.6	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	8.3	2.4
	Frequently	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Never	98.6	89.7	99.4	93.3	87.5	100.0	98.8	90.5	99.4
	Once or twice	1.0	10.3	0.4	6.7	12.5	0.0	0.8	9.5	0.4
	Frequently	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprises: 47 females, 835 males, 3 non-specified gender. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

6.3 Did respondents who experienced potentially sexual harassing behaviours consider themselves to be sexually harassed?

Given their understanding of the context in which they encountered these behaviours, did staff who were exposed to them consider they had been sexual harassed? Question 40 asked:

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment? (Select one response only).

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- Other:

Responses are presented in Table 123.

Overall, 72.3% of respondents who experienced at least one of the above listed behaviours did not consider this behaviour to be sexual harassment, while 14.5% considered themselves to have been sexually harassed.

48.9% of female respondents reported experiencing at least one of these behaviours at least 'once or twice' during the course of their career, while 51.1% had not.

47.8% of females who experienced at least one of these behaviours said they did not consider it to be harassment, while 39.1% said they did.

This translates into 19.1% of female respondents believing themselves to have been sexually harassed in one form or another during the course of their careers with the fire services, including 21.4% of non-operational female staff and 18.2% of female career firefighters.

Table 123 Whether respondents who experienced potential harassment consider it harassment – by gender and role

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
% of people who experienced behavior stating "YES"	14.5	39.1	9.2	28.6	50.0	0.0	13.2	35.3	9.7
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "No"	72.3	47.8	77.3	42.9	33.3	57.1	75.0	52.9	78.4
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "Not applicable".	8.4	0.0	9.9	21.4	0.0	42.9	7.2	0.0	8.2
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "other".	4.8	13.0	3.5	7.1	16.7	0.0	4.6	11.8	3.7
% of total respondents who experienced behavior	18.8	48.9	16.9	1.6	42.9	26.9	17.2	51.5	16.6
Not applicable (not experienced behavior)	81.2	51.1	83.1	65.9	57.1	73.1	82.0	48.5	83.4
Cohort as a percentage of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
% of respondents who feel behavior experienced amounts to sexual harassment	2.7	19.1	1.6	9.8	21.4	0.0	2.4	18.2	1.6

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

'Other' comments:

- When it was mentioned that it was inappropriate the behaviour ceased;
- Some things are and some not;
- Overly familiar;
- Not in relation to a poster as it was not personally directed at me, it was however inappropriate;
- Just unnecessary and unwise;
- I have been taunted as being gay as part of bullying;
- I feel like it's a grey area and some of this is so entrenched in the culture of the fire brigade that it is really hard to call out;
- I am not sure.

Table 124 presents the same data in terms of length of service of the respondent. The proportion of each cohort to have experienced these behaviours is significantly higher for respondents with more than 10 years of service, which may either reflect a decline in offending behaviours over the past decade, or that with longer careers there is more time to have accumulated experiences. The

percentage of respondents from each length of service cohort who consider what they experienced to have been sexual harassment remains over 5% of each cohort between 10–30 years of service.

A similar pattern is revealed when we look at the issue across different age cohorts (Table 125). The proportion of each cohort reporting to have experienced these behaviours generally rises with age cohort, remaining over 20% for respondents over 40 years of age. This suggests either that they have steadily accumulated these experiences over a longer period of time than younger colleagues, or that they experienced earlier organisational cultures more prone to exhibiting such behaviours.

Table 124 Whether respondents who experienced potential harassment consider it harassment – by length of service

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
% of people who experienced behavior stating "YES"	14.5	8.3	26.7	0.0	17.6	23.5	9.1	28.6	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "No"	72.3	83.3	66.7	80.0	67.6	70.6	63.6	67.9	87.0	68.8
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "Not applicable".	8.4	8.3	0.0	10.0	5.9	5.9	18.2	3.6	8.7	25.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "other".	4.8	0.0	6.7	10.0	8.8	0.0	9.1	0.0	4.3	6.3
% of total respondents who experienced behavior	18.8	7.5	10.8	10.8	30.9	22.1	55.0	20.7	21.1	37.2
Not applicable (not experienced behavior)	81.2	92.5	89.2	89.2	69.1	77.9	45.0	79.3	78.9	62.8
Cohort as a percentage of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
% of respondents who feel behavior experienced amounts to sexual harassment	2.7	0.6	2.9	0.0	5.5	5.2	5.0	5.9	0.0	0.0

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 125 Whether respondents who experienced potential harassment consider it harassment – by age group

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
% of people who experienced behavior stating "YES"	14.5	100.0	20.0	22.2	22.2	3.8	26.3	16.1	8.1	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "No"	72.3	0.0	60.0	72.2	66.7	80.8	73.7	71.0	75.7	63.6
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "Not applicable".	8.4	0.0	20.0	0.0	5.6	7.7	0.0	6.5	10.8	36.4
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "other".	4.8	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6	7.7	0.0	6.5	5.4	0.0
% of total respondents who experienced behavior	18.8	11.1	6.1	14.1	13.1	21.8	20.4	21.7	28.2	25.6
Not applicable (not experienced behavior)	81.2	88.9	93.9	85.9	86.9	78.2	79.6	78.3	71.8	74.4
Cohort as a percentage of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
% of respondents who feel behavior experienced amounts to sexual harassment	2.7	11.1	1.2	3.1	2.9	0.8	5.4	3.5	2.3	0.0

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

When we examine this data solely from the standpoint of female staff, as in Table 126, the proportion of each cohort that experienced behaviour rises and falls from one cohort to the next, as does the propensity to consider experienced behaviour as 'harassment', diminishing the sense of a pattern. Part of the problem is that we are dealing with small numbers of female respondents (47 overall).

Table 126 Whether respondents who experienced potential harassment consider it harassment
–Female respondents by length of service

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	Female Respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
% of people who experienced behavior stating "YES"	39.1	0.0	75.0	0.0	37.5	66.7	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "No"	47.8	100.0	25.0	50.0	37.5	33.3	100.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "Not applicable".	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "other".	13.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of total respondents who experienced behavior	48.9	22.2	66.7	25.0	72.7	33.3	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Not applicable (not experienced behavior)	51.1	77.8	33.3	75.0	27.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cohort as a percentage of total	100.0	19.1	12.8	17.0	23.4	19.1	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0
% of respondents who feel behavior experienced amounts to sexual harassment	19.1	0.0	50.0	0.0	27.3	22.2	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

Note: Sample comprised 47 female staff. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

When considered from the standpoint of age cohort (Table 127) there is a more discernible trend that the proportion of the cohort experiencing these behaviours rises with age group, while the propensity to consider the behaviour sexual harassment rises and falls with successive cohorts.

Table 127 Whether respondents who experienced potential harassment consider it harassment
–Female respondents by age group.

If you answered that you were offended, humiliated or intimidated 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	Female Respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
% of people who experienced behavior stating "YES"	39.1	0.0	100.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "No"	47.8	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	25.0	50.0	100.0	100.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "Not applicable".	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of people who experienced behavior selecting "other".	13.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
% of total respondents who experienced behavior	48.9	0.0	33.3	44.4	36.4	66.7	57.1	50.0	100.0	50.0
Not applicable (not experienced behavior)	51.1	0.0	66.7	55.6	63.6	33.3	42.9	50.0	0.0	50.0
Cohort as a percentage of total	100.0	0.0	6.4	19.1	23.4	12.8	14.9	17.0	2.1	4.3
% of respondents who feel behavior experienced amounts to sexual harassment	19.1	0.0	33.3	11.1	18.2	16.7	42.9	12.5	0.0	0.0

Note: Sample comprised 47 female staff. Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

6.4 Staff perceptions as to the acceptability of these behaviours

Question 49 of the survey asked:

In your opinion, how acceptable are these types of behaviours within the culture of the fire service? (Select one response)

- Widely and openly approved of
- Disapproved of but often tolerated
- Disapproved of and generally not tolerated
- Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation
- Other:

Table 128 sets out responses by service, gender and role. Overall, 0.6% of respondents (comprising 3.8% of male non-operational staff and 0.5% of male firefighters) consider the behaviours listed in question 39 of the survey to be ‘widely and openly approved of’. 6.2% of staff (23.4% of females, 5.1% of males) consider it ‘disapproved of but often tolerated’. 29.8% of females and 33.9% of males consider it ‘disapproved of and generally not tolerated’, while 40.4% of females and 59.2% of males consider it ‘strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation’.

The view that such behaviour is ‘strongly and clearly disapproved of’ is espoused more by firefighters (59.4%) than non-operational staff (31.7%), both for females (45.5% vs 28.6%) and males (60% vs 34.6%). It is espoused by proportionally more MFB firefighters than CFA firefighters (females MFB 52.4% vs CFA 33.3%, males MFB 63.1% vs CFA 54.4%). However 28.6% of MFB female firefighter respondents thought it ‘disapproved of but often tolerated’, as opposed to 8.3% of CFA female firefighters, and 50% of CFA non-operational female staff.

Table 128 Perception of the degree of acceptability of potentially sexually harassing behaviours within the culture of the fire services – by gender and role

In your opinion, how acceptable are these types of behaviors within the culture of the fire service?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Widely and openly approved of	0.6	0.0	0.6	2.4	0.0	3.8	0.5	0.0	0.5
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	6.2	23.4	5.1	14.6	28.6	7.7	5.8	21.2	5.1
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	33.7	29.8	33.9	48.8	35.7	53.8	32.9	27.3	33.3
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	58.1	40.4	59.2	31.7	28.6	34.6	59.4	45.5	60.0
	Other	1.5	6.4	1.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	1.4	6.1	1.2
	Cohort as a % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
CFA	Widely and openly approved of	1.1	0.0	1.1	3.8	0.0	5.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	8.4	22.2	7.6	15.4	50.0	5.0	7.8	8.3	7.8
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	36.7	44.4	36.3	46.2	16.7	55.0	35.9	58.3	35.1
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	52.3	33.3	53.3	34.6	33.3	35.0	53.6	33.3	54.4
	Other	1.6	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.8
	Cohort as a % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
MFB	Widely and openly approved of	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	4.7	24.1	3.3	13.3	12.5	16.7	4.4	28.6	3.1
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	31.5	20.7	31.8	53.3	50.0	50.0	30.5	9.5	31.5
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	62.3	44.8	62.7	26.7	25.0	33.3	62.6	52.4	63.1
	Other	1.4	10.3	2.0	6.7	12.5	0.0	2.4	9.5	2.1
	Cohort as a % of total	58.1	5.6	94.9	2.9	53.3	40.0	98.2	4.2	95.4

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 129 considers the issue in terms of length of service. Staff with between 10-30 years service have the strongest propensity to view these behaviours as ‘disapproved but often tolerated’, particularly in the CFA. Staff with less than 15 years of service tend to be more strongly of the view that it is ‘strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation’.

In table 130 the data is presented in terms of age cohorts. Staff under 35 are more inclined to believe more strongly that this sort of behaviour is considered unacceptable. MFB staff are more consistent across age cohorts, ranging from 74.2% to 55.1%, whereas CFA staff range from 83.3 to 34.1% across cohorts, with more support for the proposition in the younger age groups.

Table 129 Perception of the degree of acceptability of potentially sexually harassing behaviour within the culture of the fire services – by length of service

In your opinion, how acceptable are these types of behaviors within the culture of the fire service?		All respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Widely and openly approved of	0.6	0.0	0.7	1.1	0.9	1.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	6.2	2.5	5.0	3.2	10.9	9.1	15.0	10.4	1.8	7.0
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	33.7	31.4	30.2	39.8	29.1	41.6	40.0	28.9	40.4	32.6
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	58.1	64.8	63.3	54.8	55.5	46.8	40.0	58.5	56.9	60.5
	Other	1.5	1.3	0.7	1.1	3.6	1.3	0.0	2.2	0.9	0.0
	Cohort as a % of total	100.0	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
CFA	Widely and openly approved of	1.1	0.0	2.0	2.3	0.0	2.2	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	8.4	4.0	4.1	4.7	13.1	10.9	11.8	20.8	4.5	25.0
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	36.7	30.7	34.7	48.8	31.1	41.3	41.2	41.7	40.9	37.5
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	52.3	63.4	59.2	44.2	54.1	43.5	41.2	33.3	50.0	37.5
	Other	1.6	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.2	0.0	4.2	4.5	0.0
	Cohort as a % of total	41.9	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
MFB	Widely and openly approved of	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	4.7	0.0	5.6	2.0	8.0	6.3	33.3	8.0	1.1	2.9
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	31.5	31.7	27.8	32.0	26.0	40.6	33.3	25.9	39.8	31.4
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	62.3	65.0	65.6	64.0	56.0	50.0	33.3	63.4	58.0	65.7
	Other	1.4	3.3	1.1	2.0	8.0	3.1	0.0	2.7	1.1	0.0
	Cohort as a % of total	58.1	11.7	17.5	9.7	9.7	6.2	0.6	21.8	17.1	6.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 130 Perception of the degree of acceptability of potentially sexually harassing behaviours within the culture of the fire services – by age group

In your opinion, how acceptable are these types of behaviors within the culture of the fire service?		All respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Widely and openly approved of	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	6.2	11.1	1.2	6.3	5.1	6.7	10.8	7.7	3.8	9.3
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	33.7	11.1	22.0	28.9	35.0	35.3	44.1	33.6	38.2	30.2
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	58.1	77.8	75.6	63.3	54.7	58.0	45.2	55.9	55.7	58.1
	Other	1.5	0.0	1.2	0.8	3.6	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.8	2.3
	Cohort as a % of total	100.0	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
CFA	Widely and openly approved of	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	8.4	16.7	0.0	8.1	4.2	10.3	13.6	17.1	10.0	7.7
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	36.7	0.0	23.1	30.6	40.8	41.4	52.3	40.0	36.7	30.8
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	52.3	83.3	75.0	59.7	49.3	48.3	34.1	40.0	46.7	53.8
	Other	1.6	0.0	1.9	1.6	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	7.7
	Cohort as a % of total	41.9	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
MFB	Widely and openly approved of	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disapproved of but often tolerated	4.7	0.0	3.2	4.5	5.9	3.3	8.2	4.6	2.0	9.7
	Disapproved of and generally not tolerated	31.5	33.3	19.4	26.9	27.9	29.5	36.7	31.2	38.6	29.0
	Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation	62.3	66.7	74.2	65.7	58.8	67.2	55.1	60.6	58.4	58.1
	Other	1.4	0.0	3.2	1.5	7.4	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.0	3.2
	Cohort as a % of total	58.1	0.6	6.0	13.0	13.2	11.9	9.5	21.2	19.6	6.0

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

‘Other’ comments

- What is the Fire Service?
- until recently there was a culture of disapproval but tolerated, now there is strong disapproval and not tolerated;
- They are not condoned by fire station staff at all but some senior management think it is ok;
- Strongly and clearly disapproved of and not tolerated throughout the organisation but also exceedingly rare (non-existent) in my personal experience;
- Strongly and clearly disapproved of and generally not tolerated;
- Pictures and sexually explicit material on station is widely accepted;
- Occurs within volunteer ranks but not tolerated or occurring in career staff;
- Male dominated environment results in acceptance of behaviour;
- Joking and mucking around with your co-workers is ok, so long as everyone has a firm understanding of where everyone's boundaries are and we're lucky to work in such a close and accepting environment, that we have a really good idea of where our colleagues boundaries lie;
- I believe it has evolved particularly over the last ten years and what was disapproved of but often tolerated is now clearly disapproved and not tolerated, even though rarely something still occurs;
- Disagree with the terms of reference;

- Depends on the situation ... black humour is a great coping mechanism;
- A number of these behaviours occur frequently in a context where they are not offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

6.5 What would staff do if they were exposed to such behaviour?

Question 41 sought to elicit free text information about how staff would deal with these behaviours were they confronted by them:

49. If something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?

Responses were analysed for themes and five broad categories of response derived:

- Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command / organisation services.

These responses reflected either an expectation or knowledge that a workable procedure / policy was in place, that there are people to take such issues to, and a determination to not tolerate misbehaviour. Most will speak directly to the source of the problem and seek to resolve the issue quietly, but have no hesitation in referring the matter to an appropriate authority should the behaviour not desist.

- Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy.

These responses expressed a broad preference to deal with harassing behaviour as directly and locally as possible, to draw on the support of peers or the union rather than defer to their organisation's procedure. There is a strongly prevalent assumption that if alerted to the effect they were having, the person causing offense would desist.

- Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice.

Most of these responses imply there is a low sense of trust in the organisation's willingness or ability to fairly deal with a matter such as this without making matters worse.

- Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances.

No line of action proposed apart from finding out what to do about it

- Inappropriate / Non-response / Other.

These responses are summarised in Table 131 by service, gender and role. In both services, the predominant view (56% overall) is to refer the matter up the chain of command, usually after a direct attempt to address the matter fails. The next largest cohort (33.7%) would deal with the matter personally and directly, without recourse to an official procedure. 3.7% of respondents overall would do nothing out of a belief that the organisation they work for has neither the will nor an effective process to fairly manage the issue. Faith in the chain of command appears stronger among CFA respondents (65.2%) compared those with the MFB (53.9%), with CFA staff less likely (28%) than MFB staff (37.7%) to deal with the matter without recourse to formal channels of redress. Proportionally more females (6.4%) than males (3.5%) responded that they would ignore the issue. Non-operational staff (39%) were less willing than firefighters (59.6%) to follow a formal procedure or refer the matter to the chain of command, yet were similar in their willingness to deal with the matter directly (34.1% vs 33.6% respectively). Non-operational staff, particularly males, were less decided (17.1%) about what they would do, compared to firefighters (2.4%). CFA male and female firefighters show similar support for referring matters up the chain of command (67.3% vs 66.7%) and for dealing with the matter directly (27.3% vs 25% respectively), while MFB firefighter males are more inclined to do both than are their female colleagues. 9.5% of MFB female firefighters are disposed to ignoring the issue, which no CFA female firefighter proposes to do.

Table 131 How respondent believes they would react to being subjected to such behaviour by service, gender and role

If something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?		All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Both Services	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	58.6	53.2	59.0	39.0	50.0	30.8	59.6	54.5	60.0
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	33.7	31.9	33.8	34.1	35.7	34.6	33.6	30.3	33.7
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	3.7	6.4	3.5	9.8	7.1	11.5	3.4	6.1	3.2
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	3.1	6.4	2.9	17.1	7.1	23.1	2.4	6.1	2.2
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.9	2.1	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	3.0	0.9
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	4.1	0.2	3.8	0.2	0.2	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.8
CFA	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	65.2	61.1	65.4	38.5	50.0	35.0	67.2	66.7	67.3
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	28.0	27.8	28.0	38.5	33.3	40.0	27.2	25.0	27.3
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	4.0	5.6	4.0	11.5	16.7	10.0	3.5	0.0	3.6
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	2.2	0.0	2.3	11.5	0.0	15.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.5	5.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	8.3	0.3
	Cohort as % of total	41.9	4.9	95.1	7.0	23.1	76.9	93.0	3.5	96.5
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
MFB	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	53.9	48.3	54.4	40.0	50.0	16.7	54.3	47.6	54.8
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	37.7	34.5	38.0	26.7	37.5	16.7	38.1	33.3	38.2
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	3.5	6.9	3.1	6.7	0.0	16.7	3.4	9.5	2.9
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	3.7	10.3	3.3	26.7	12.5	50.0	3.0	9.5	2.7
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.3
	Cohort as % of total	58.1	5.6	93.8	2.9	53.3	40.0	97.1	4.2	95.4
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	2.0	0.2	1.8	0.2	0.2	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service). Free text responses were coded into categories.

Table 132 considers the issue in terms of length of service, which reveals a declining propensity to refer the issue to formal adjudication processes until 15-25 years of service, at which point the propensity to do so slightly rises and plateaus. This effect is particularly noticeable in the MFB. There is a concurrent rise in the preference to deal with the issue personally, without recourse to formal process that peaks around 15-25 years of service, as does the propensity to ignore the issue.

Table 132 How respondent believes they would react to being subjected to such behaviour by length of service

If something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?		0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 year of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Both Services	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	74.8	68.3	63.4	57.3	39.0	50.0	48.9	53.2	44.2
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	22.0	24.5	32.3	32.7	48.1	40.0	43.0	42.2	32.6
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	2.5	4.3	1.1	3.6	6.5	5.0	4.4	1.8	9.3
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	0.6	2.2	3.2	6.4	5.2	5.0	2.2	2.8	4.7
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.5	0.0	9.3
	Cohort as % of total	18.0	15.7	10.5	12.4	8.7	2.3	15.3	12.3	4.9
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1
CFA	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	78.2	73.5	67.4	65.6	43.5	52.9	45.8	63.6	50.0
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	17.8	20.4	30.2	26.2	43.5	41.2	41.7	36.4	25.0
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	4.0	2.0	0.0	3.3	8.7	5.9	8.3	0.0	12.5
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	0.0	2.0	2.3	4.9	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	27.2	13.2	11.6	16.4	12.4	4.6	6.5	5.9	2.2
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
MFB	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	69.0	65.6	60.0	46.9	32.3	33.3	49.5	50.6	42.9
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	29.3	26.7	34.0	40.8	54.8	33.3	43.2	43.7	34.3
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	0.0	5.6	2.0	4.1	3.2	0.0	3.6	2.3	8.6
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	1.7	2.2	4.0	8.2	6.5	33.3	2.7	3.4	2.9
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	11.4
	Cohort as % of total	11.3	17.5	9.7	9.5	6.0	0.6	21.6	16.9	6.8
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.1

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 133 presents responses according to age cohort and shows a patterning across age cohorts similar to that across length of service cohorts: a declining propensity to use formal process and a rising willingness to deal with the perpetrator directly.

The rising willingness to address the matter directly may signify growing self-confidence, more informal connections and other resources the person has developed over time to consult about it, or a belief in discretion so as not to create rifts and animosities that may take a long time to heal. It may also signify a declining confidence that the organisations they work for can be trusted to address the issue.

Table 133 How respondent believes they would react to being subjected to such behaviour by age cohort

If something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?		20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Both Services	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	77.8	72.0	73.4	61.3	57.1	58.1	51.0	47.3	41.9
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	22.2	25.6	20.3	32.1	36.1	34.4	40.6	44.3	32.6
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	0.0	1.2	5.5	2.2	2.5	2.2	4.9	4.6	9.3
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	0.0	1.2	0.8	3.6	4.2	4.3	2.8	2.3	9.3
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.1	0.7	1.5	7.0
	Cohort as % of total	1.0	9.3	14.5	15.5	13.4	10.5	16.2	14.8	4.9
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.1
CFA	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	66.7	80.8	71.0	62.0	69.0	61.4	57.1	50.0	46.2
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	33.3	17.3	22.6	29.6	27.6	36.4	28.6	36.7	38.5
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	0.0	1.9	4.8	2.8	1.7	2.3	11.4	6.7	7.7
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	0.0	0.0	1.6	4.2	1.7	0.0	2.9	3.3	7.7
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0
	Cohort as % of total	1.6	14.0	16.7	19.1	15.6	11.9	9.4	8.1	3.5
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1
MFB	Follow policy / refer it up the chain of command /organisation services	100.0	56.7	75.8	60.6	45.9	55.1	49.1	46.5	40.0
	Deal with it directly without reference to organisation or hierarchy	0.0	40.0	18.2	34.8	44.3	32.7	44.4	46.5	30.0
	Ignore it / put up with it / not expect justice	0.0	0.0	6.1	1.5	3.3	2.0	2.8	4.0	10.0
	Don't know / Non-committal / depends on circumstances	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.0	6.6	8.2	2.8	2.0	10.0
	Inappropriate / Non-response / Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.9	1.0	10.0
	Cohort as % of total	0.6	5.8	12.8	12.8	11.9	9.5	21.0	19.6	5.8
	Answers including consult / report to UFU	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.0

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

6.6 Self-identification of perpetrators of potentially sexually harassing behaviours

Tables 134-135 report the results of asking respondents to signify if they have perpetrated any of the behaviours listed as potential forms of sexual harassment.

Despite the efforts we have taken to preserve the anonymity of respondents, we did not expect that people who know they have behaved in ways that might be considered sexual harassment would feel comfortable admitting so in an online survey.

We nevertheless thought it worthwhile to see what responses we drew, but do not consider the data strongly reliable as to the actual prevalence of these behaviours.

Question 43 asked ‘Have you knowingly risked offending, humiliating or intimidating a co-worker by:’ followed by the same list of behaviours presented in Section 6.2 (above).

Again, respondents could choose from:

- Never
- Once or twice
- Frequently

The one respondent who claimed to have perpetrated all listed behaviours on a frequent basis is presumed to be making a sarcastic protest at being asked such a question.

4.3% of female respondents admit to staring and leering once or twice, while 6% of staff overall admit to making suggestive comments or jokes once or twice.

Table 134a Has respondent behaved in a manner that is potentially sexual harassing – by gender and role

Have you knowingly risked offending, humiliating or intimidating a co-worker by:		All respondents	Females	Males	All non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Staring or leering at them	Never	99.3	95.7	99.6	97.6	92.9	100.0	99.4	97.0	99.6
	Once or twice	0.6	4.3	0.2	2.4	7.1	0.0	0.5	3.0	0.2
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against them or unwelcome touching	Never	99.3	100.0	99.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.3	100.0	99.4
	Once or twice	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.5
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Suggestive comments or jokes	Never	93.8	97.9	93.7	95.1	100.0	92.3	93.7	97.0	93.7
	Once or twice	6.0	2.1	6.1	4.9	0.0	7.7	6.0	3.0	6.1
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Insults or taunts of a sexual nature	Never	98.5	100.0	98.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.5	100.0	98.5
	Once or twice	1.4	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.4
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Intrusive questions or statements about their private life	Never	98.3	100.0	98.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.2	100.0	98.3
	Once or twice	1.5	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.5
	Frequently	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature	Never	99.4	100.0	99.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.4	100.0	99.4
	Once or twice	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 134b Has respondent behaved in a manner that is potentially sexual harassing – by gender and role (cont.)

Have you knowingly risked offending, humiliating or intimidating a co-worker by:		All respondents	Females	Males	All non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	All Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Sending someone sexually explicit emails or text messages	Never	99.7	100.0	99.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.6	100.0	99.6
	Once or twice	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Inappropriate advances on social networking sites	Never	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9
	Once or twice	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Accessing sexually explicit internet sites in their presence	Never	99.5	100.0	99.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.5	100.0	99.5
	Once or twice	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Making requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates	Never	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9
	Once or twice	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9
Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.	Never	99.7	100.0	99.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.6	100.0	99.6
	Once or twice	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Frequently	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cohort as % of total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

6.7 Do perpetrators view disclosed behaviour as sexual harassment?

Question 44 asked: 'Where you answered 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to doing any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?'. Respondents were invited to choose one option:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Other: [a free text option].

The results are presented in Table 135.

Table 135 Does the respondent view their disclosed behaviour as sexual harassment?

Where you answered 'once or twice' or 'frequently' to doing any of the above, do you consider this to be sexual harassment?	All respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Yes	1.0	0.0	1.1	2.4	0.0	3.8	0.9	0.0	1.0
No	5.2	6.4	5.1	4.9	7.1	3.8	5.2	6.1	5.2
Not Applicable	92.7	93.6	92.7	92.7	92.9	92.3	92.7	93.9	92.7
Incorrectly marked N A	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Other	0.8	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.7
Total	100.0	5.3	94.4	4.6	34.1	63.4	95.4	3.9	95.9

Note: Sample comprised 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific). Period covered not defined (up to 35+ years of service).

Table 135b 'Other' comments

"Other" comments	
1	There was no intent and likely poorly chosen words that were misinterpreted. In any regard when in that rare situation I have addressed the issue and apologized if I believed I should
2	Not until now.
3	Jokes that could be considered sexual.
4	It was and I have regretted it. It was long in the past and I see that the culture encouraged it and I tried to fit in. I never ever do any of these any more since I got educated better!
5	Intended as humor but unintended consequence could be seen as harassment
6	In a way yes and not proud of it. It can be easy to get caught up in a culture
7	Attempting to obtain information for welfare purposes could have been handled better by me.
Additional comment by Not Applicable respondent	
1	There is a very unique culture within the fire services. It is an essential part of coping with the mental challenges faced by firefighters.

6.8 Respondent opinion as to how best to minimise sexual harassment

The final question in this sequence asked staff:

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?

If we are seeking a measure of the willingness to address the issue, the offering of suggestions as to how that should be done would seem a reasonable rough indicator. Even where people insist that it is not a significant problem in the fire services

Table 136 Suggestions for minimising sexual harassment in the fire services – both services by gender and role

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?	Suggestions by respondents	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Regular training / education	45.2	45.6	45.3	34.0	31.3	33.3	45.8	51.2	45.7
intervene where it happens / mediate fairly / discipline offenders	12.5	21.1	12.0	18.0	31.3	12.1	12.2	17.1	12.0
Maintain current policy / comply with existing law	5.5	0.0	5.8	6.0	0.0	9.1	5.5	0.0	5.7
Encourage people to report it immediately	5.3	3.5	5.4	8.0	0.0	12.1	5.2	4.9	5.1
Collective commitment to not tolerate it / be respectful professional and courteous	5.0	7.0	5.0	2.0	0.0	3.0	5.2	9.8	5.0
Directly immediately address / counsel the offender or potential offender discretely	3.8	5.3	3.6	2.0	0.0	3.0	3.9	7.3	3.6
I have never seen it / It does not occur / not an issue	3.4	1.8	3.5	2.0	6.3	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.6
Put appropriate, independent and fair procedures in place, support for victims transformative justice	3.4	5.3	3.3	8.0	12.5	6.1	3.1	2.4	3.2
Don't know	2.4	1.8	2.4	4.0	0.0	6.1	2.3	2.4	2.3
We have a good, inclusive and supportive culture at our station / organisation that would not tolerate such behavior	2.3	1.8	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	2.4
Assess staff including recruits for their behavior	1.7	1.8	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.4	1.7
No response	1.4	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.5
Better management at all levels / reestablish trust	1.3	0.0	1.4	2.0	0.0	3.0	1.2	0.0	1.3
More gender balance	1.2	5.3	0.9	6.0	18.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.0
Off topic	1.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.2
Ignore it / stop being PC	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.9
Zero tolerance	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.9
We already understand it is unacceptable	0.8	0.0	0.8	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.7	0.0	0.8
We have processes in place to discipline staff but not volunteers	0.6	0.0	0.6	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
Its wrong but not intentional / black humour hard for outsiders to appreciate / don't react too harshly	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
Gender specific change rooms	0.4	0.0	0.4	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Encourage retirement of older workers	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Applies to a small number who behave badly	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Anonymous surveys	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
The UFU should not defend people when the evidence of their wrongdoing is clear	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
More HR involvement	0.1	0.0	0.1	2.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mindful rostering	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Avoid sexual discussions or activities at work	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Suggestions per cohort as % of all suggestions	100.0	5.6	93.8	4.9	32.0	66.0	95.1	4.3	95.2

Note: 1107 suggestions made by 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

Table 136 indicates that 45.2% of staff suggestions argued for awareness training, particularly to new recruits and staff undertaking promotion, so that they know their responsibilities for addressing the issue in their new role. 12.5% of suggestions urged taking immediate action whenever it is detected, making sure repeat offenders are effectively disciplined, 5.5% pointed to current programs underway and believed they should be continued, while others suggested ways to give people the confidence to report it, such as making sure complaints are promptly and fairly acted upon. A large number of responses included a statement that they do not consider this a significant issue in the fire service, and view the emphasis on the matter as part of the vilification campaign firefighters experienced over EBA negotiations and in the lead-up to the federal election campaign.

Female and male staff both emphasise education and training followed by immediate intervention and action to discipline the perpetrator. Females do not support the proposition to maintain and apply the existing policy that 5.8% of males do, being more strongly supportive of a policy that immediately acts on reports, and follows through with appropriate discipline of perpetrators. Female firefighters are more supportive of managing the issue directly and with discretion (7.3%) than are males (3.8%), but otherwise show a similar order of priority of support for suggestions. Equal proportions of male and female firefighters are of the view that their own workplace is supportive and inclusive and would not tolerate bad behaviour. Non-operational female staff show strong support (18.8%) for improved gender balance, while it is not considered relevant by a single female career firefighter.

Table 137 Suggestions for minimising sexual harassment in the fire services – both services by length of service

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?	Suggestions by respondents	0 - 3 years of service	3 - 6 years of service	6 - 10 years of service	10 -15 years of service	15 - 20 years of service	20 - 25 years of service	25 - 30 years of service	30 - 35 years of service	35 years +
Regular training / education	45.2	34.9	37.4	41.1	44.8	48.0	44.0	51.0	62.5	51.0
intervene where it happens / mediate fairly / discipline offenders	12.5	14.5	13.5	14.0	15.7	10.2	24.0	7.9	9.2	10.2
Maintain current policy / comply with existing law	5.5	7.0	7.7	1.9	2.2	10.2	8.0	6.6	4.2	0.0
Encourage people to report it immediately	5.3	7.0	6.5	3.7	6.0	3.1	4.0	4.0	5.0	8.2
Collective commitment to not tolerate it / be respectful professional and courteous	5.0	9.3	6.5	6.5	3.7	4.1	0.0	4.0	2.5	0.0
Directly immediately address / counsel the offender or potential offender discretely	3.8	5.8	0.6	4.7	6.0	3.1	0.0	3.3	4.2	2.0
I have never seen it / It does not occur / not an issue	3.4	3.5	4.5	2.8	2.2	2.0	0.0	4.6	1.7	8.2
Put appropriate, independent and fair procedures in place, support for victims transformative justice	3.4	2.9	3.2	2.8	3.0	5.1	8.0	4.0	3.3	0.0
Don't know	2.4	5.2	1.3	1.9	2.2	1.0	4.0	3.3	0.0	2.0
We have a good, inclusive and supportive culture at our station / organisation that would not tolerate such behavior	2.3	1.2	1.9	8.4	3.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.8	2.0
Assess staff including recruits for their behavior	1.7	1.2	2.6	2.8	2.2	0.0	4.0	0.7	1.7	2.0
No response	1.4	2.9	0.6	0.9	1.5	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1
Better management at all levels / reestablish trust	1.3	0.6	1.9	0.9	2.2	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.8	0.0
More gender balance	1.2	0.6	2.6	0.9	2.2	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	2.0
Off topic	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	2.5	2.0
Ignore it / stop being PC	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.7	3.1	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Zero tolerance	0.8	0.0	1.3	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.8	0.0
We already understand it is unacceptable	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
We have processes in place to discipline staff but not volunteers	0.6	0.0	1.3	0.9	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Its wrong but not intentional / black humour hard for outsiders to appreciate / don't react too harshly	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	4.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Gender specific change rooms	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Encourage retirement of older workers	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Applies to a small number who behave badly	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anonymous surveys	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The UFU should not defend people when the evidence of their wrongdoing is clear	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More HR involvement	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mindful rostering	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Avoid sexual discussions or activities at work	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Suggestions per cohort as % of all suggestions	100.0	17.0	15.3	10.6	13.3	9.7	2.5	14.9	11.9	4.8

Note: 1107 suggestions made by 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

Table 137 relates these suggestions to length of service, showing fairly consistent support for the main propositions across cohorts. It is noteworthy that support for strong education and training on the topic is greatest among respondents with longer lengths of service, that the strongest support for encouraging immediate reporting was among those with 35 + years service, while at the same time they were most likely to deny its existence as an issue or not respond to the question. Clearly, there are a diverse range of opinions on the topic within each length of service cohort.

Table 138 Suggestions for minimising sexual harassment in the fire services – both services by age cohort

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?	Suggestions by respondents	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55 - 59	60 +
Regular training / education	45.2	44.4	28.3	38.0	44.2	45.6	48.7	47.7	52.9	61.2
intervene where it happens / mediate fairly / discipline offenders	12.5	33.3	13.0	10.7	14.9	14.0	11.5	12.3	12.4	4.1
Maintain current policy / comply with existing law	5.5	0.0	8.7	5.3	3.9	2.9	11.5	6.5	3.9	2.0
Encourage people to report it immediately	5.3	11.1	5.4	7.3	3.2	7.4	3.5	2.6	7.2	6.1
Collective commitment to not tolerate it / be respectful professional and courteous	5.0	0.0	6.5	8.0	7.1	6.6	5.3	2.6	2.0	0.0
Directly immediately address / counsel the offender or potential offender discretely	3.8	0.0	5.4	3.3	5.2	2.2	2.7	3.2	4.6	4.1
I have never seen it / It does not occur / not an issue	3.4	11.1	3.3	4.0	3.2	2.9	0.9	4.5	3.9	2.0
Put appropriate, independent and fair procedures in place, support for victims transformative justice	3.4	0.0	3.3	3.3	3.2	2.9	7.1	3.2	1.3	4.1
Don't know	2.4	0.0	4.3	0.7	5.2	1.5	0.0	3.9	2.0	0.0
We have a good, inclusive and supportive culture at our station / organisation that would not tolerate such behavior	2.3	0.0	4.3	4.7	2.6	1.5	0.9	1.9	0.7	2.0
Assess staff including recruits for their behavior	1.7	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.7	1.8	0.6	1.3	4.1
No response	1.4	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.6	1.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	6.1
Better management at all levels / reestablish trust	1.3	0.0	2.2	0.7	1.3	1.5	0.9	2.6	0.7	0.0
More gender balance	1.2	0.0	2.2	2.0	1.9	0.7	0.9	0.0	1.3	0.0
Off topic	1.1	0.0	1.1	1.3	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.6	2.0	2.0
Ignore it / stop being PC	0.8	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.6	1.3	0.0
Zero tolerance	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.7	0.0	1.9	0.7	0.0
We already understand it is unacceptable	0.8	0.0	1.1	2.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
We have processes in place to discipline staff but not volunteers	0.6	0.0	1.1	0.7	0.0	1.5	0.9	0.0	0.7	0.0
Its wrong but not intentional / black humour hard for outsiders to appreciate / don't react too harshly	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Gender specific change rooms	0.4	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.0	2.0
Encourage retirement of older workers	0.2	0.0	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Applies to a small number who behave badly	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anonymous surveys	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The UFU should not defend people when the evidence of their wrongdoing is clear	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More HR involvement	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Mindful rostering	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Avoid sexual discussions or activities at work	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Suggestions per cohort as % of all suggestions	100.0	0.9	9.1	14.8	15.2	13.5	11.2	15.3	15.1	4.8

Note: 1107 suggestions made by 885 staff (47 female, 835 male, 3 non-gender specific).

Table 138 considers the age of respondents, showing growing support for education and training on the issue with age. Apart from the very small 20-24 cohort, the relative degree of support for a suggestion is fairly consist across cohorts. The 25-29 cohort were the most likely to not offer a suggestion (6.5%) followed by the 60+ age group (6.1%). Those between 25 and 50 tend more than older respondents to see the issue as one of making a collective commitment not to tolerate it and to cultivate respectful habits, while those aged 25 – 35 see the least need for education which nevertheless remains their most common suggestion.

Table 139 Suggestions for minimising sexual harassment in the fire services – CFA by gender and role

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?	CFA respondent suggestions	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non-operational females	Non-operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Regular training / education	42.6	36.4	42.9	24.2	16.7	25.9	44.1	43.8	44.1
intervene where it happens / mediate fairly / discipline offenders	15.6	22.7	15.2	18.2	33.3	14.8	15.4	18.8	15.2
Maintain current policy / comply with existing law	6.3	0.0	6.6	6.1	0.0	7.4	6.3	0.0	6.6
Encourage people to report it immediately	4.9	4.5	4.9	12.1	0.0	14.8	4.3	6.3	4.2
Collective commitment to not tolerate it / be respectful professional and courteous	6.0	13.6	5.6	3.0	0.0	3.7	6.3	18.8	5.8
Directly immediately address / counsel the offender or potential offender discretely	3.5	4.5	3.4	3.0	0.0	3.7	3.5	6.3	3.4
I have never seen it / It does not occur / not an issue	1.9	4.5	1.7	3.0	16.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8
Put appropriate, independent and fair procedures in place, support for victims transformative justice	4.4	4.5	4.4	9.1	16.7	7.4	4.0	0.0	4.2
Don't know	2.6	4.5	2.5	3.0	0.0	3.7	2.5	6.3	2.4
We have a good, inclusive and supportive culture at our station / organisation that would not tolerate such behavior	1.6	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8
Assess staff including recruits for their behavior	1.6	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.8
No response	1.9	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.1
Better management at all levels / reestablish trust	1.2	0.0	1.2	3.0	0.0	3.7	1.0	0.0	1.0
More gender balance	0.9	4.5	0.7	3.0	16.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Off topic	0.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Ignore it / stop being PC	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Zero tolerance	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
We already understand it is unacceptable	0.9	0.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	3.7	0.8	0.0	0.8
We have processes in place to discipline staff but not volunteers	0.9	0.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	3.7	0.8	0.0	0.8
Its wrong but not intentional / black humour hard for outsiders to appreciate / don't react too harshly	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
Gender specific change rooms	0.2	0.0	0.2	3.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Encourage retirement of older workers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Applies to a small number who behave badly	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Anonymous surveys	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The UFU should not defend people when the evidence of their wrongdoing is clear	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More HR involvement	0.2	0.0	0.2	3.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mindful rostering	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Avoid sexual discussions or activities at work	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Suggestions per cohort as % of all suggestions	100.0	5.1	94.9	7.7	18.2	81.8	92.3	4.0	96.0

Note: Table depicts 430 suggestions made by 371 CFA staff (18 females, 353 males).

CFA respondents show a similar ordering of preference for suggestions (Table 139) as the two services overall, apart from a much stronger emphasis (13.6% vs 5.6%) among female firefighters for people to commit to being respectful and professional to one another and slightly less emphasis (36.4%) than males (42.9%) on education. Females do not support the maintaining of current policy, the third strongest preference of males. Non-operational females show the least support for education (16.7%) and the most for immediate intervention and discipline of perpetrators (33.3%). 16.7% of non-operational females support greater gender balance, while career firefighter females make no mention of it.

Female respondents in the MFB (Table 140) place slightly more emphasis (51.4%) than males (47%) on education, and are more likely to support immediate intervention and discipline when appropriate (20% vs 9.6%). 4.9% of male firefighters state they have never seen it, a view not supported by other cohorts. Female firefighters show stronger support (8%) for direct and discrete response to reports than males (3.7%).

Table 140 Suggestions for minimising sexual harassment in the fire services – MFB by gender and role

Given that even a low level of sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, what should be done to minimise the risk of it in the fire service?	MFB respondent suggestions	Females	Males	Non-operational staff	Non Operational females	Non Operational males	Career firefighters	Career firefighter females	Career firefighter males
Regular training / education	47.2	51.4	47.0	52.9	40.0	66.7	47.0	56.0	46.8
intervene where it happens / mediate fairly / discipline offenders	10.2	20.0	9.6	17.6	30.0	0.0	9.9	16.0	9.7
Maintain current policy / comply with existing law	5.0	0.0	5.2	5.9	0.0	16.7	5.0	0.0	5.1
Encourage people to report it immediately	5.7	2.9	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	4.0	5.8
Collective commitment to not tolerate it / be respectful professional and courteous	4.3	2.9	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	4.0	4.5
Directly immediately address / counsel the offender or potential offender discretely	4.0	5.7	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	8.0	3.7
I have never seen it / It does not occur / not an issue	4.5	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	0.0	4.9
Put appropriate, independent and fair procedures in place, support for victims transformative justice	2.6	5.7	2.4	5.9	10.0	0.0	2.5	4.0	2.4
Don't know	2.2	0.0	2.4	5.9	0.0	16.7	2.1	0.0	2.2
We have a good, inclusive and supportive culture at our station / organisation that would not tolerate such behavior	2.8	2.9	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	4.0	2.8
Assess staff including recruits for their behavior	1.7	2.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	4.0	1.7
No response	1.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
Better management at all levels / reestablish trust	1.4	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.5
More gender balance	1.4	5.7	1.1	11.8	20.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
Off topic	1.2	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.3
Ignore it / stop being PC	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Zero tolerance	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
We already understand it is unacceptable	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7
We have processes in place to discipline staff but not volunteers	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Its wrong but not intentional / black humour hard for outsiders to appreciate / don't react too harshly	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
Gender specific change rooms	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.6
Encourage retirement of older workers	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Applies to a small number who behave badly	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Anonymous surveys	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
The UFU should not defend people when the evidence of their wrongdoing is clear	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
More HR involvement	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mindful rostering	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Avoid sexual discussions or activities at work	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Suggestions per cohort as % of all suggestions	100.0	6.0	92.9	2.9	58.8	35.3	97.1	4.4	94.7

Note: Table depicts 581 suggestions by 514 MFB staff (29 females, 482 males).

6.9 Concluding discussion on sexual harassment

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 33% of women have been sexually harassed since the age of 15, and 25% of women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past 5 years (AHRC, 2012: 15).

These statistics are based on a definition of sexual harassment provided in the 1984 Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act, which defines sexual harassment thus:

28A Meaning of sexual harassment

(1) For the purposes of this Division, a person sexually harasses another person (the person harassed) if:

- (a) the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed; or
- (b) engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed;

in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

(1A) For the purposes of subsection (1), the circumstances to be taken into account include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) the sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, religious belief, race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, of the person harassed;
- (b) the relationship between the person harassed and the person who made the advance or request or who engaged in the conduct;
- (c) any disability of the person harassed;
- (d) any other relevant circumstance.

(2) In this section:

conduct of a sexual nature includes making a statement of a sexual nature to a person, or in the presence of a person, whether the statement is made orally or in writing.

In the course of this survey, we asked people to indicate if they had experienced any of a list of behaviours we derived from a simply worded list of example sexual harassment behaviours located on the AHRC website (Tables 112-122). In Table 141 we present the list in order of the number of female staff who say they have been subjected to them at least once.

Table 141 Frequency of citation of sexual harassment example behaviours

Sexual Harassment Behavior	% of female survey respondents who were exposed to behavior
suggestive comments or jokes	29.8
intrusive questions or statements about your private life	25.5
unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching	21.3
displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature	21.3
staring or leering at you	19.1
insults or taunts of a sexual nature	17.0
requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates	10.6
behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.	8.5
someone sending you sexually explicit emails or text messages	6.4
people accessing sexually explicit internet sites in your presence	6.4
inappropriate advances on social networking sites	4.3

Of the 47 female respondents to the survey, 23 (48.9%) indicated that in the course of their careers with the two fire services, they had at least once or twice been exposed to these behaviours (Table 123). We have no data on when these experiences occurred so we cannot say if they occurred in the last five years or not. The average length of service of the 23 females who experienced them is 12.5 years, with 63% having more than 10 years service.

When asked if they considered this to have been sexual harassment, 14 said they did not and 9 (6 firefighters and 3 nonoperational staff), or 19% of female survey respondents, said they did consider this to have been sexual harassment.

The challenge of making sense of this data is that we do not have the context of the situation as it is known to the respondent, and must rely on their judgement as to the gravity of the situation. They have a more nuanced understanding of the meaning that may or may not be attaching to a colleague's behaviour. In normal workplaces, for example, personnel have gender-specific changing rooms, but since these are called for (by men) for both fire services in suggestions offered in Tables 136-140, they evidently are not currently available to all staff. The potential for this situation to lead to 'indecent exposure', for example, may be fully understandable to the person confronted by it, even though they were embarrassed or humiliated by the experience when it occurred. It would presumably depend on their reading of the other person and the situation as to whether they considered this an act of sexual harassment. To presume that these behaviours always are acts of sexual harassment is clearly not a fair or rational conclusion.

From the outset of this study, we have noted that this is not a random stratified sample, since respondents are Union members who self-selected to participate, and its main value is to uncover

how these issues are viewed by the 885 staff who participated, without necessarily assuming the results can be extrapolated to those that did not. Nevertheless, on the basis of this exercise, the picture that emerges among the comments and reported experiences of respondents is that this is not a culture rife with sexual harassment, notwithstanding the evidence that it does exist and happened to 19% of female staff who responded to the survey, at some stage in their (often long) careers.

The presumption that sexual harassment would be more widespread comes from the observation that firefighting is an unusually male-dominated (95%) occupation, whose employees have often been with the same employer for several decades, and because of staffing freezes in the past have a higher average age than the general workforce. The assertion that women would be more poorly treated in this environment than in the average workplace seems perfectly credible. However, there is more to the culture of the fire services that men and women firefighters alike will point to, that while some poor behaviour occurs as it does in all workplaces, the very nature of firefighting breeds values of mutual support, teamwork and trust that is anathema to the mistreatment of women firefighters by their male colleagues.

It is the presence of this ethos on shifts of fire crews that possibly explains the wide disparity of reported experience between female firefighters and female non-operational staff within the same organisation. For example, throughout the survey it is clear that the gender imbalance is not significant for women firefighters at all, while it is very significant for female non-operational staff. Non-operational female staff face the same senior management at closer range, within the confines of a stereotypical corporate management culture, and report far higher levels of bullying and discrimination than their female firefighter counterparts.

This is not to suggest that there is not work to be done to ensure the issue of sexual harassment is better managed, only that the implied accusation made by the former Minister in several press releases in December 2015, and in March 2016 when she released the report of the Fire Services Review, that sexual harassment was rife among career firefighters, is not borne out in this data.

Unquestionably, we know that this is a significantly mature aged workforce, and it may be that the habits of a life-time, such as the style of jokes one makes, may be slow to adapt to modern expectations, or the presence of people (irrespective of their gender) who may be offended by them for religious or other cultural reasons. While some may resent the imposition of what they see as 'political correctness', and expressed this in comments in this survey, the sense they have that firefighters 'have each other's back' generally means they would desist from conduct if they thought it to be threatening or humiliating to their women colleagues.

Indeed, in Tables 128 -130 there seems fairly strong support for the proposition that these behaviours are not considered acceptable by the great bulk of fire services personnel these days, with over 91% of personnel, predominantly male, saying they are disapproved of and totally or generally not tolerated. Much of the commentary in this section expresses considerable resentment at the suggestion that sexual harassment happens, some saying they've never seen it, while others say the situation has evolved over the last ten years where the display of explicit material, etc., was previously disapproved of but tolerated, to now not being tolerated.

However, from the standpoint of 23.4% of female staff (though not CFA female firefighters) such behaviours are still 'often tolerated' *despite* being disapproved of, which warrants consideration of how these situations are being dealt with. In response to the question 'if something like this were to one day happen to you, and you were personally offended, humiliated or intimidated by it, what would you do about it?' 58.6% of staff said they would refer it up the chain of command or follow the appropriate procedure, whereas 33.7% said they would approach the person causing the issue and ask them to desist. If that failed, many added, they would refer it up the chain of command (Table 131). But while 92.3% said they would take prompt action to deal with it in one of these ways, 3.7% of respondents, including 6.4% of female respondents, said they would ignore it or put up with it. This was the position of 16.7% of CFA non-operational females and 9.5% of

MFB female firefighters. This suggests a need to ensure a procedure for addressing the issue is in place that these people can feel they can place their trust in.

In asking fire services personnel if they themselves had perpetrated any of the sexual harassment behaviours we listed (Table 134), 6.1% of male firefighters, 3% of female firefighters and 7.7% of non-operational males declared they had made suggestive comments or jokes, consistent with it being the most commonly experienced form of harassment (Table 134a). Apart from 7.7% of female non-operational staff admitting to 'staring and leering' once or twice, for the most part staff were unwilling to associate themselves with this sort of behaviour even in an anonymous online survey. When the 6.5% of survey respondents who had declared themselves to have partaken in such behaviour were asked if they considered what they had done to be sexual harassment, 5.2% said they thought not and 1% thought it was. In 'other' comments several people explain how they have come to know better than to act that way now, and to be more sensitive to how their actions might be interpreted.

The final question in this sequence asked staff what policy they would like to see pursued to deal with the issue. In Table 136 we see 885 staff generated 1107 responses, 45.2% of which promoted training and education on what constitutes sexual harassment and training in how to respond to it when it arises. Others argue for different forms of immediate intervention, ranging from zero tolerance of repeat offenders to ensuring fair, discrete processes of adjudication and transformative justice are in place. Many argue for sticking with various initiatives currently underway that they think have merit. Even many of those who say it does not occur to any significant extent, that say they have a very caring, inclusive and supportive culture at their station, nevertheless make some positive suggestion.

It rankles with many to be placed in a position of defending their reputations over this matter. They consider the focus given to it by the former Minister as an extension of the vilification of firefighters have endured for years over their EBA and in the lead in to the Federal Election.

Nevertheless, alongside the 23 females who experienced potentially sexually harassing behaviours, so did 141 males. While 9 of those women considered what they experienced to be sexual harassment, so did 13 of those males and two people of non-specific gender. Although these 24 people who were sexually harassed represent only 2.7% of survey respondents, by their 1000+ suggestions for managing the issue, the vast majority of fire service personnel surveyed here demonstrate they think it is wrong and support action being taken to protect fellow fire service personnel like these people in the future.

7. Opinion summary

Analysis of free text comments for both the opinion section and the final comments.

Method

Most of the survey questions were of a multiple choice nature with some including an 'other' category which provided space for a free text answer. Two additional opportunities were provided for respondents to express their views in more detail, on issues of their choosing.

The first invited a free text comment following a series of strength of agreement / disagreement questions to several contentious propositions. These included two findings from the 2015 Fire Services Review, comments on the impact on morale of the industrial legal cases the CFA and MFB had previously launched against their workforces, and comments relating to the issue of increasing gender diversity within the fire services.

The second opportunity to comment was an invitation to raise any matter the respondent wished in free text at the conclusion of the questionnaire.

These two sections collectively generated 522 comments from 400 comment makers. Comments varied significantly in length with many containing several distinct elements. Through a process of breaking these down into constituent parts, we derived 151 propositions that recurred with different frequencies among the comments. The data is presented in Tables 141a – 141e.

This data can only be taken as broadly indicative of sentiments existing among the respondents. We can only crudely infer as to how supported or widespread these views are. Issues that are mentioned with high frequency are more likely to be widely held, but we cannot infer, for example, whether or not they reflect a majority viewpoint.

We need to respect that some of these issues are antagonising to many of the respondents, who are offended and upset that they are expected to answer for their attitudes and behaviours to critics who have little understanding of the stresses and challenges of their work, or how they go about doing it. They see themselves and their colleagues as hard-working, self-sacrificing, reliable protectors of the community who take pride in their skill and courage, and see the questioning of their personal conduct as a continuation of the public vilification they have endured for seeking safer working conditions through the industrial laws provided to all workers for that purpose.

At the same time they are not a homogenous group. Even Union members are critical of some aspects of how the Union has represented them in certain issues, perspectives which are just as important for the Union to understand as are the many strong statements of support expressed in the survey for the efforts it makes on its members behalf.

Table 142a Propositions derived from comments in both the survey opinion section and ‘anything to add section’ by frequency of comment (46 – 10 expressions)

CFA / MFB management have not supported staff in the face of media attacks.	46
CFA/ MFB Media and Liberal party attack has damaged morale and undermined mental health	45
Standards should not be lowered to achieve higher female participation. Gender targets are wrong. Appointment should be based on merit not gender	40
I do not trust or respect senior management / leadership	37
The main / only bullying I have seen is by senior managers of staff	36
VFBV have deliberately misled public and volunteers and incited hostility toward career firefighters	34
Management need to be held accountable for their behavior	33
Deeply stressed by the hostile personal and public environment media have cultivated	29
The management failed to defend their workforce against vilification in the media (7)	28
Morale is at an all time low	23
Current women firefighters got there on merit and are respected and trusted for their ability to do the job	21
Management need to respect and recognise that firefighters place public safety and their own safety first.	21
Management disrespect for firefighters, corporate members and UFU has damaged morale	18
Drawn out EBA process has damaged morale	17
Media campaign has damaged morale	17
There is no culture that accepts bullying and harassment. Everyone respects and supports each other.	17
The management is hostile to its workforce	17
Management have knowingly damaged morale to further IR agenda	16
Volunteers should be held to the same discipline standards as career firefighters	15
I only trust the union to protect the safety of firefighters	14
Public fighting over EBA and toxic environment has gone on too long	13
Management handling of EBA is bad, particularly failure to defend workforce from media attacks.	12
UFU just as responsible as other actors	12
Firefighters need to feel their senior leadership support them and listen to them rather than attack / undermine them	12
I feel safe and supported by my peers	12
I doubt the service will recover from the damage the management have done to it.	12
Firefighters used as pawns by the Federal government for election purposes.	11
Management campaign has aggravated public aggression when responding	11
There needs to be some way to hold media accountable for lies	11
Strong support for the union	11
These HR EEO issues were raised for political purposes	10
Firefighters resent having to defend themselves for wanting safe working conditions	10
Management do not value firefighters	10
Political grandstanding destroying public confidence in fire services	10
Management have prioritised themselves above the public or staff safety interest	10
Volunteers intimidate career firefighters with complaints that harm employment security	10

Derived from 522 comments by 400 comment makers.

Table 142b Propositions derived from comments in both the survey opinion section and ‘anything to add section’ by frequency of comment (9 – 4 expressions)

We need separate services of volunteers / career firefighters	9
Management acquiescence in the media / volunteer vilification of firefighters is covert bullying	9
I don't tell people what I do for a living to avoid having to defend myself	8
CFA is run amateurishly and resists improving reforms	8
Stop using firefighters as political footballs for political gain	8
Management have attacked the reputation of firefighters with lies	8
Union has protected people whose behavior did not warrant their protection	7
Liberal party should be held accountable for their lies if they worsen PTSD and provoke suicide.	7
Avoid political parties and focus on community and firefighter safety	7
I will never trust the management again after the lies they told over Fiskville	7
Union has not consulted its membership over issues in dispute	7
Management failure to show support and leadership is demoralising	7
Union and management need to be more flexible in negotiations	6
CFA/MFB needs leaders at the top that firefighters can respect	6
I have only experienced a hostile MFB/CFA management	6
CFA more concerned with keeping volunteers happy than providing an efficient and professional service	6
Rank command and control structure can camouflage bullying	6
Firefighters families – including children – have been subjected to threats and abuse	6
Management make shallow meaningless comments	6
Firefighters stick by and support each other in the face of management hostility	6
Issues complained of in survey happened many years ago and much has improved since then	5
every EBA we have to suffer a loss of morale	5
Firefighters are sensitive to the needs and emotions of others	5
Firefighters are decent hardworking people	5
No escape from the media vilification campaign at work or home	5
Volunteers should not be involved in EBA	4
Union members intolerant of dissenters	4
MFB / CFA needs to return to being run by people with an operational background	4
Volunteer brigades riven with personal rivalries, insulting toward career firefighters	4
CFA stifles our response capability	4
There is banter and black humour that relieves the stress and engenders comradery that outsiders could not understand	4
I have seen great improvement in the standards of behavior over the years - the situation is improving	4
We work harmoniously at station level - any bullying / harassment are isolated incidents	4
I'm seriously thinking of leaving the job	4

Derived from 522 comments by 400 comment makers.

Table 142c Propositions derived from comments in both the survey opinion section and ‘anything to add section’ by frequency of comment (3 – 2 expressions)

We have low gender diversity because not many women wish to be firefighters – its not because of an anti-woman culture	3
It is the career firefighters that drive professionalism and improving standards in the CFA	3
Management are too detached from real work to understand it or solve its problems	3
Female recruits need 6 – 9 months to prepare prior to recruit test if it is to work.	3
Bullying and harassment exists everywhere, its no worse in fire service, less subtlety in emergency services makes it easier to address.	3
Find a better way to negotiate the EBA	3
Ratio of men / women should reflect the proportion of women in society who wish to be firefighters	3
To deal with bullying there needs to be properly resourced reporting and hearing procedures	3
money spent by management to attack workforce safety and conditions should have been used to buy vital equipment	3
Tradition of pranks - relieves built up tension- non malicious but people are amused by different things	3
CFA has a boys club mentality that determines career progress.	2
UFU and BCOM have been the only support for FF, EBA negotiations have brought firefighters together	2
In recent times people are treated fairly and can raise issues, was not always the case	2
These questions were written by / to favour the union / survey biased	2
Awareness training on inappropriate behavior should be regular and ongoing	2
One station in particular has a bullying culture	2
Inappropriate behavior or sexual harassment are not tolerated in my workplace	2
All races and genders exist in fire service – if in doubt make the application process race / gender blind	2
No quick fix to low gender representation – children must know it is an option, media should use non-gender language.	2
I feel the efforts I have contributed and the sights I have endured count for nothing	2
Our communities deserve better than this from organisation leadership	2
Fire brigade culture is positive and inclusive – this seems like politically correct BS	2
Best job in the world.	2
Management say they want greater diversity but provide no accommodation to current staff with unique needs	2
There should be proper policy provision for pregnant firefighters before more women employed, with meaningful workplace and workload to encourage retention	2
CFA dangerously inflates egos of volunteers, pretends their skills are equivalent of career FF	2

Derived from 522 comments by 400 comment makers.

Table 142d Propositions derived from comments in both the survey opinion section and ‘anything to add section’ by frequency of comment (1 expression)

Management doesn't acknowledge that women are in senior CFA operational roles	1
Bullying mediation process is meaningless as bully not sanctioned despite finding against them	1
Survey favoured the UFU with too many questions on sexual harassment	1
I don't think MFB workplace culture (harassment) is bad, just not moved with times since workplace has low turnover and workers not exposed to newer attitudes. What was acceptable even 10 years ago is not today	1
Volunteers feeling responsible and embarrassed	1
Government should not be involved in EBA or have a veto.	1
Victims of bullying go on sick leave and don't report for fear of retribution	1
Take contentious issues from EBA and embed them in operational guidelines. Restrict EBA to payments and conditions of employment	1
Organisation seems not to understand that excluding people from meetings is bullying.	1
Treating some staff differently to others engenders sense of victimisation	1
Disappointed union has pulled volunteers into dispute	1
Young and female volunteers are bullied by senior volunteers	1
Give firefighters on shift more say over procedures and equipment	1
Don't conflate bullying among volunteers with career firefighters	1
I cannot forgive them for labelling us as anti-female thugs.	1
Union demands have forced management to put policies to protect against poor behavior in place.	1
CFA preaches a standard of conduct but everyone (volunteers, firefighters, support staff, senior managers) make disparaging remarks about racial minorities.	1
There should be provision for people to work part time – particularly women returning from maternity leave	1
Management need to consult with operational staff as they don't understand the fire service	1
Majority older white male workforce does have issues with gender, sexual orientation race. Building diversity is a good idea.	1
The geographic separation from senior management makes life in the stations bearable	1
Well being training is useful but workplace behavior sessions do not reflect understanding of the work environment	1
Show public the turnout response rates of volunteers compared with career firefighters	1
Women firefighters have to do more to earn respect than male firefighters	1
Union should have less say on operational matters	1
I fear someone will suicide	1
Anomalies in the equity of pay structure	1
It is hard to find firefighting jobs so people will put up with a lot and not make waves	1
Long tenure of firefighters mean some still conduct themselves according to what was acceptable 20 years ago which is not acceptable today.	1
You have to risk conflict to tackle management over bad practices	1
I have stopped following news media and limit social media because it upsets me	1
Members don't support union position over MFB termination case	1
Militant unionists do try enforce their strength of commitment on others – but its not usually a problem.	1
Greater diversity will assist with an already improving culture	1

Derived from 522 comments by 400 comment makers.

Table 142e Propositions derived from comments in both the survey opinion section and 'anything to add section' by frequency of comment (1 expression) (cont.)

Need to focus on more than sexual harassment - physical appearance, sexual orientation	1
Manager turned blind eye to bullying	1
Too many alpha males on recruit course gave it a footy team feel - not desirable	1
I have seen degrading initiations	1
I have been bullied by OIC and seen suicides from bullying within the CFA	1
VFBV Leadership should be sacked	1
Union should use its leadership role and power more ethically and not excuse bad behavior	1
Commander level has to show better leadership	1
Members should be able to view film of negotiations	1
We need to explain the contentious clauses to the public more clearly	1
UFU position on safety is wrong - they have caused politicization	1
Very strong peer pressure to be in union - group emails comment on non-members	1
UFU members harass career firefighters who remain in volunteer role	1
Until the scabs are gone there will be no harmony	1
There has been serious impact on morale of budget cuts	1
All fire service personnel, paid and volunteer, deserve respect.	1
Establish presumptive legislation and health monitoring	1
Current support services are an excellent resource	1
Let us get on with the job we are meant to be doing	1
Union should be more strident in challenging lies in the media	1

Derived from 522 comments by 400 comment makers.

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