



**Bushfire CRC
Enhancing Volunteer Recruitment and Retention
Project (D3)**

**Tasmania Fire Service
Report Number 1: 2009**

Main Report Volunteer Leadership Development Survey

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May 2009

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Introduction

Volunteer-based emergency services throughout Australia need to sustain adequate numbers of volunteers in order to protect the lives, properties, and assets of communities vulnerable to bushfires. Concerns have been expressed about the likely future impacts of (a) changes in the Australian economy and (b) Australia's ageing population, on emergency services volunteer numbers. The Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) can do little to influence the underlying economic and demographic factors threatening volunteer numbers; however it may be able to reduce the rate at which volunteers leave – that is boost retention. Some resignations are inevitable, such as those due to changed family responsibilities, re-location due to work commitments, ageing, illness and disability. However, some other resignations may be avoidable where brigade morale is high and member commitment is strong.

TFS requested the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (BCRC) Volunteerism Team at La Trobe University to undertake collaborative research to support a Volunteer Leadership Development Project. The project aims to investigate the leadership needs of TFS with the aim of fostering brigade morale and member commitment. The project involves four activities:

1. Interviews by Bushfire CRC staff with TFS Senior Management: Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officers, and Region Chiefs;
2. Focus groups with TFS volunteers;
3. A mail-out survey of TFS volunteers seeking their views on brigade leadership needs; and
4. Focus groups with Brigade Chiefs in each Region.

This report documents the findings of Activity 3, the survey of TFS volunteers. The survey was designed to obtain volunteers' views on the quality of leadership experienced in their brigades and identify areas for improvement. The team conducted a survey of 4,195 TFS volunteers between December 2008 and February 2009, receiving over 900 responses.

In addition to presenting the responses of the sample as a whole, several comparisons among specific subsets of respondents are reported. In particular, the responses of leaders, and high-ranking leaders, are compared with the responses of all others¹. Leaders were defined as those who reported currently holding one of the following positions: Group Officer, Brigade Chief, 1st Officer, 2nd Officer, 3rd Officer, 4th Officer, Leading Firefighter, Safety Officer, Training Instructor, Communications Officer, Secretary, Treasurer, Association Representative, Permit Officer, and/or Equipment Maintenance Officer². High-ranking leaders were defined as those who reported holding the rank of Group Officer, Brigade Chief or 1st Officer. According to the organisational structure of the TFS, the most senior volunteer officer in a volunteer brigade holds the title Brigade Chief. However, in composite brigades (including both career and volunteer personnel) and in volunteer brigades operating within the area of a career brigade, the most senior volunteer is called the 1st Officer. Group Officers are typically also a Brigade Chief, or have previously served as Brigade Chief. Thus, all "high-ranking" leaders referred to in this report currently hold (or have held) the most senior rank in their brigade. Comparisons of ratings made by respondents in different types of communities (rural vs. small town vs. suburban community) were also conducted. Finally, age and gender differences are also reported where appropriate.

¹ Where the data violate several of the assumptions critical to appropriate use of parametric statistics (including heterogeneity of variance, unequal cell sizes, and non-normal distributions), findings are based on the more conservative non-parametric statistics (e.g. Mann-Whitney U tests instead of Independent t tests).

² Although some TFS staff have expressed the opinion that non-operational positions are not 'leadership' positions, we adopt a broad definition of leadership which acknowledges that there are a variety of ways in which a volunteer may 'take the lead' in some aspect of the functioning of their brigade.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge Robyn Pearce and Lucas van Rijswijk of the Tasmanian Fire Service for their generous assistance and support in conducting this survey.

Methodology & Sample

The Volunteerism Project Team in collaboration with staff from TFS Human Services designed a 4-page paper-based questionnaire (see Appendix A) which was addressed and posted to volunteers by TFS Human Services. Responses to the questionnaire were anonymous, although respondents were asked to indicate their Region, and questionnaires were to be returned directly to La Trobe University in Melbourne by reply paid envelopes. The researchers undertook not to release any information that might identify any respondent.

The questionnaires were posted to 4, 238 volunteers registered with the TFS in 2008, 43 of which were returned as incorrectly addressed. Of the 4,195 remaining surveys, a total of 923 responses (22%) were returned between December 2008 and February 2009. The response rate is consistent with the response rates achieved in other surveys in the volunteer fire sector (e.g., Beatson, McLennan & Birch, 2008; McLennan & Birch, 2007).

Executive Summary

Demographics and brigade characteristics

Overall, comparisons made with TFS membership records indicate that the survey sample was highly representative of the volunteer population of TFS, both in terms of gender and age. Male respondents made up 83% of the sample, and the median age of respondents was 49 years. This compares well with TFS records of the adult volunteer membership which indicate that 85% of TFS volunteers are male and that the median age is 45 years.

The median length of service indicated by survey respondents was 12 years, with 7 years for women and 14 years for men. In comparison, TFS records indicate that the median length of service is 9 years, with 5 years for women and 9 for men. Survey respondents were typically Active members (making up 95% of the sample), many of whom held leadership positions in their brigades.

In fact, 60% of respondents indicated that they had held a TFS leadership position at some stage, with 52% of survey respondents indicating that they also *currently* held a leadership position. Using the available TFS data, it appears that at least 50% of TFS volunteers holding the rank of 1st Officer or higher responded to the survey. In comparison, an estimated 20% of volunteers *not* holding these high-ranking positions responded. Thus, the views of those in high-ranking leadership positions are particularly well-represented.

Most respondents indicated that they were employed (81%). Gender differences in employment status indicated that male respondents were more likely to be employed on a full time basis than were female respondents, while female respondents were more likely than male respondents to be engaged in part time employment and parenting responsibilities. Differences in employment status were also observed between respondents from different types of communities. The percentage of retired respondents was higher in rural communities, and conversely, the percentage of respondents employed full time was higher among suburban than rural communities.

All three TFS Regions were well represented in the survey sample. Approximately 42% of responses were from the Southern Region, 37% from the Northern Region, and 21% from the North Western Region. These numbers correspond closely to TFS records which indicate that 41% of the membership is in the Southern Region, 35% in the Northern Region, and 23% in the North Western Region.

The majority of survey respondents indicated that they lived in a small rural community (60%). Importantly, the median age of respondents was about 10 years older among those from rural communities and small towns, compared with those from suburban areas. Difficulties associated with an aging membership are therefore most likely to be experienced in rural communities and small towns sooner.

Estimates of the number of active members in the respondents' brigade ranged from 1 to 42, with a median of 15 active members. Estimates of the number of non-active members ranged from 0 to 35 with a median of 4. The median number of active members estimated was smaller among respondents from rural brigades (12) and small towns (15) than from suburban communities (20). While the median number of non-active members did not vary by community type (medians of 4 to 5), the proportion of non-active members did. Respondents from suburban communities

estimated that one in five members of their brigade were non-active, whereas respondents from small towns and rural communities estimated that one in every four members of their brigade were non-active.

Approximately 40% of respondents indicated that their brigade had a Juniors or Cadets program. Such programs were more common in larger than smaller brigades, but not more common among urban than rural brigades.

The types of incidents most frequently attended were grass or scrub fires. Respondents estimated that their brigade attended a median of 15 such fires each year, with some respondents suggesting that their brigade responded to up to 250 each year. The median number of motor vehicle accidents attended by brigades was 5 per year, while the median number of structure fires was 3 per year. For all types of incidents, the median number attended by one's brigade was higher among respondents from suburban communities than small towns and rural communities.

What is it like being in your brigade?

Overall, respondents indicated that their experiences with the local brigade were rarely negative, and generally positive. Approximately 80% strongly agreed that they had not experienced any bullying, discrimination, or harassment in their brigade. However, 10% of respondents indicated that they had experienced these negative behaviours, and women respondents were twice as likely as men, to indicate that they had been the recipients of such treatment.

Over 60% of respondents strongly agreed that the brigade atmosphere was positive with new members welcomed, people from different backgrounds getting along well, and members feeling safe with others' behaviours and the responsibilities assigned to them. However, ratings of planning and organisation were less positive. Less than one third of respondents strongly agreed that training sessions were well-planned and organised, and more than 20% indicated that they were not well planned. Furthermore, among respondents who did not hold any formal positions in their brigade, almost 30% disagreed that training was well planned or organised. Similarly, almost one third of respondents indicated that there was no organised social program in their brigade – an observation that was associated with lower ratings of satisfaction with the volunteering experience³ and the perceived overall quality of brigade leadership⁴, though not directly with intentions to remain⁵.

There was also some indication that there is room for improvement with regard to brigade politics. In contrast to the 80% of respondents able to strongly agree that they had not experienced bullying, approximately only 50% of respondents strongly agreed that there were not problems with factions in their brigade, that conflict between members was rare, that all members took part in decision making and that the brigade let them know what was going on.

Overall then, it appears to be the case that a useful first step toward improving volunteers' experiences in the brigade would be to provide leaders with the skills needed to address issues of conflict and factionalism, and to improve the organisation and planning of training and social activities.

³ $\beta = .256, t(867) = 7.79, p < .001$

⁴ $\beta = .450, t(817) = 14.44, p < .001$

⁵ At $p < .01$.

Addressing issues of factionalism appears to be a particularly important area for improvement in suburban brigades, where more than one in five respondents indicated problems with factions, and approximately 15% of respondents indicated having experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination (compared with 7% in smaller communities). It may also be worth bringing to the attention of leaders, the fact that their non-office bearing counterparts do not perceive the brigade atmosphere as positively as themselves.

What is the leadership in your brigade like?

Survey respondents were presented with a series of statements about the quality of leadership in their brigade. Overall, leadership was evaluated positively, with most respondents indicating that they either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the positive statements. Nevertheless, some aspects of brigade leadership were evaluated more positively than others. For example, items relating to the skills and knowledge of brigade officers, and their efforts to maintain safe working practices, were endorsed more strongly than those relating to interpersonal communication and dealing with troublesome members. Less than 50% of respondents strongly agreed that brigade officers corrected members privately if practical, dealt promptly with trouble caused by any member, and were good communicators.

Ratings of one particular aspect of brigade leadership varied substantively more than others: whether a new brigade chief was elected after two or three terms. TFS allows terms of office to be up to 5 years between elections. While 23% of respondents disagreed that a new chief was elected after two to three terms, 22% did not know, and only 33% strongly agreed. This may be some cause for concern as the degree to which respondents agreed that a new chief was regularly elected significantly predicted the overall evaluation of leadership quality. Those who disagreed that the leadership incumbents changed regularly were generally less satisfied with the overall quality of leadership in their brigade. Also, some dissatisfaction with brigade politics was reflected in free response comments at the end of the survey, with several respondents alleging that the integrity of election processes in their brigade had been seriously compromised. Thus, it appears that managing brigade politics is one area in which it may be particularly useful to further develop positive leadership processes and skills.

It may be worth considering: (a) shortening the standard terms of office from 5 to 2 years, (b) taking actions to foster positive attitudes toward more regular changes in leadership positions, and (c) equipping leaders with the skills to facilitate smooth transitions from one leader to another via succession planning and mentoring.

The evaluations of leadership quality made by respondents holding leadership positions were compared with those not occupying such positions. Those occupying leadership positions typically gave more favourable evaluations of the leadership in their brigade than other respondents. The largest leader-member differences emerged on ratings of items concerning people management skills.

It may therefore be useful to include in any leadership development programs, some measures aimed specifically at providing leaders with enhanced skills in: (a) effective face-to-face communication, (b) conflict resolution, and (c) avoiding behaviours that signal interpersonal or intergroup favouritism.

Comparisons among respondents from different types of communities indicated that those in suburban areas experienced problems with brigade politics and officer-member interactions more

so than did others. It may therefore be worthwhile considering a particular focus on improving brigade politics and interpersonal skills in leadership development programs to be delivered in suburban areas.

How important are these leadership skills?

The survey listed several different leadership skills and asked respondents the extent to which they agreed that each of these skills was important. All the listed skills were considered important, with over 90% of respondents selecting strongly or somewhat agree. However, some skills were considered more important than others. More than 75% of respondents strongly agreed that promoting teamwork, helping new members mix with others, and keeping members informed were important, and approximately 70% strongly agreed that mentoring and developing members to move into leadership roles were important. In contrast, the types of skills that were least endorsed were those relating to less rewarding aspects of leadership positions. Approximately 55-65% of respondents strongly agreed that disciplining members, managing discontent and factionalism, and holding members accountable, were important skills. Nevertheless, it is precisely these types of skills that respondents rated as relatively lacking in their current brigade leaders. The lower ratings of perceived importance of these skills may reflect a tendency to justify the present system: “if our leaders don’t do as well in these respects, it is because these are probably less important”.

The responses of leaders were compared with those of the remaining respondents. Few differences emerged. However, there was some evidence that those occupying higher-ranking leadership positions agreed more strongly than others that promoting the interests of the brigade, developing members for leadership positions, and keeping members informed are important leadership skills. *It may therefore be useful to consider including components on these types of skills in leadership development programs – if they are to be well-received. Skills for developing members for leadership positions would be particularly useful given the association between rotation of office-bearing positions and satisfaction with leadership.*

How important are these brigade leader behaviours?

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed that several behaviours and characteristics were important in brigade leaders. As was the case for leadership skills, the majority of respondents (over 88%) agreed that each of the listed behaviours were important. The most important behaviours related to being honest and trustworthy, being fair, and setting a good example (with over 80% of respondents strongly agreeing that each of these behaviours were important). Between 70% and 77% of respondents strongly agreed that the following behaviours were important: acting in a manner consistent with one’s proposed course of action; keeping skills and knowledge up to date; listening to people’s concerns; keeping a sense of humour and balancing the members’ work, family and brigade demands. About two thirds of respondents strongly agreed that keeping an open mind about new ideas and understanding people’s feelings were important. The behaviours that were seen as relatively less important were promoting the interests of the brigade to TFS and outside organisations (60% strongly agreed), and developing a vision for the brigade (53%). The only significant difference between the ratings made by leaders and others was on the item concerning understanding people’s feelings. Leaders tended to agree more strongly than others that this was an important characteristic for leaders. There were no significant differences between men and women, or community types.

The higher ratings on the importance of behaviours relating to being fair and not taking sides suggest that inclusion of components for enhancing such skills in leadership development programs would be considered relevant by program participants.

What are good ways for members to become good brigade leaders?

Respondents were presented with a list of ways in which members could become good brigade leaders. All of the training options were rated positively; indeed, over 80% of respondents agreed to some extent that each would be useful. However, some forms of training were clearly considered more favourably than others. Mentoring by more experienced members and on-the-job learning were the most favourably evaluated means to developing good leaders, with about 70% of respondents indicating that they strongly agreed such measures were useful. Attitudes toward training courses run by experts in leadership and management were more positive than training courses run by the brigade. Indeed, 64% of respondents strongly agreed that courses run by experts would be useful, compared with 54% strongly agreeing that courses run by the brigade would be useful. Attitudes toward residential training away from the brigade were least positive, with only 38% of respondents strongly agreeing that this form of training would be useful.

These findings suggest that a leadership development program incorporating training from experts in leadership would be well-received if delivered locally with a view to providing current brigade leaders with the skills to implement on-the-job training and mentoring programs for developing brigade members into future brigade leaders.

How important are training courses in these leadership skills?

In addition to being asked about the usefulness of different modes of delivery for leadership training, respondents were also asked how important they perceived training courses in a variety of different leadership skills to be. Training courses in all skills were considered important by the majority of respondents (with more than 86% rating them somewhat or very important). Nevertheless, some training courses were perceived to be more important than others. The following list shows the percentage of respondents rating each course as very important: courses in people management skills (70%), effective face-to-face communication (68%), managing brigades (67%), inducting and mentoring new members (65%), developing teams (65%), resolving conflicts and disputes (63%), ensuring workplace fairness (63%), supervising work groups (57%), running meetings (43%) and courses on effective written communication (43%).

Consistent with other findings from the survey, these results suggest that an emphasis on people management skills (particularly, communication) and brigade management skills (e.g., planning and organisation of training and social events) would be well-received if incorporated into a leadership development program.

Brigade leadership satisfaction and intention to remain

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements “Leadership in my brigade is very good” and “Volunteering in my brigade is very satisfying for me.” Responses to both items were generally positive. Indeed, 60% strongly agreed that leadership was good, and a further 28% agreed somewhat. In addition, 70% of respondents strongly agreed that volunteering with their brigade was satisfying, while an additional 25% agreed somewhat.

Respondents were also asked about the likelihood of their continuing to volunteer with TFS in 12 months and three years’ time. Again, responses were largely positive, with 82% of respondents

indicating that it was very likely they would still be volunteering with TFS in 12 months time. However, the number of respondents indicating that they would still be with TFS in three years time was substantively lower, with only 66% of respondents indicating that this was very likely. The ratings made by women respondents suggested that they were somewhat less likely than their male counterparts to continue volunteering.

Several analyses were conducted to test how strongly several variables could predict intentions to remain. Longer length of service was associated with a higher likelihood of continuing to volunteer in three years' time among younger respondents (i.e., those less than 30 years of age), but not older respondents, whose availability becomes increasingly limited for a variety of reasons (e.g., family commitments and health concerns). Greater satisfaction with volunteering, perceived quality of leadership in one's brigade, and occupation of a leadership role, all predicted greater likelihood of continuing to volunteer. Also, those in rural communities expected to continue volunteering more so than those in suburban communities, and this was not attributable to those in rural communities agreeing more than others that they remained because there was nobody else to take their place. Rather, there appears to be some tentative evidence that the more positive brigade climate plays a role in greater intentions to remain among rural respondents. Further analyses will be required to more thoroughly test this proposition.

Work and TFS volunteering

Respondents were asked about several potential difficulties they faced in turning out during working hours. Of the 66-77% of respondents for whom work-related barriers were applicable, 31% strongly agreed that working too far from the station made it hard to turn out in work or business hours. Just over one in five respondents strongly agreed that it was hard to turn out because their workplace could not spare them, or because of the lost time their turning out would cost themselves or their employer. It is somewhat encouraging that only 13% of respondents strongly agreed that it was hard to turn out because their employer did not understand why it is important. However, an additional 12% agreed "somewhat" that their employer's understanding made it difficult to turn out in working hours. Given the large percentage of TFS volunteers who are employed (approximately 60% are either employed on a part or full time basis) it may be prudent for TFS to consider adopting strategies to improve employer attitudes toward TFS volunteering. Nevertheless, it is worth keeping in mind that some of the reasons for a lack of availability during working hours are intractable in many cases, and alternatives may need to be sought.

Family and TFS volunteering

The survey included a series of items concerning the impact of TFS volunteering on family life. Overall, respondents indicated that the impact on family life was more positive than negative. Indeed, over 70% of respondents agreed that knowledge and a sense of achievement derived from TFS volunteering helped them to be better family members. Simultaneously, more than 70% of respondents *disagreed* that their volunteering with TFS kept them from participating in family activities or contributing equally to household responsibilities. However, it is worth noting that further analysis showed the negative effects of volunteering on meeting family responsibilities and participating in family activities were felt more strongly by women than men, and that these negative aspects of volunteering predicted lower intentions of continuing to volunteer in the near future.

Why do you remain a volunteer with TFS?

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Respondents were asked about their reasons for continuing to volunteer. Generally, the more positive reasons for remaining were endorsed most strongly. For example, while 85% of respondents strongly agreed that they remained because they believe the TFS has important function to perform, only 8% strongly agreed that they remained because they felt there was no one else in the community to take their place.

Family support was noted as an important reason for continuing to volunteer (62% strongly agreed with this statement), as was protecting assets (55%), participating in community life (53%), and enjoying most aspects of volunteering (52%). Fewer respondents strongly agreed that having friends in TFS (40%), hopes to become an officer (26%), someone to look after the children (23%), or a partner in TFS (15%) were reasons they remained.

The only gender difference to emerge on reasons for remaining a volunteer pertained to having a partner in the TFS. Women agreed more strongly than men that this was a reason they remained. However, this may be attributable to a greater percentage of women than men simply having partners in the TFS.

Leaders tended to agree more strongly than others that they continued to volunteer because they felt there was no one in the community to take their place, but also for more positive reasons including having many friends in the TFS, enjoying the responsibility, and among high-ranking leaders, having a family that is very supportive of their volunteering.

Community based differences also emerged on several items. Specifically, those in rural communities agreed more than others that they remained (a) because they felt there was no one to replace them, and (b) to better protect their home and assets. There was also some indication that respondents in rural communities were more likely than respondents from other types of communities to have a partner in TFS. However, it is unclear to what extent this affects volunteers' intentions to remain.

Factors that limit involvement in TFS

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed a variety of different factors often limited their involvement in TFS. Perceived TFS bureaucracy and work commitments were the most limiting factors, with 24% and 22% of respondents indicating that they strongly agreed these factors often limited their involvement, respectively. The percentage of respondents strongly agreeing that the following factors often limited their involvement were as follows: complexity of TFS activities (15%), the out-of-pocket expenses (12%), demands of training or assessment (10%), internal brigade politics (10%), parenting and family activities (9%), lack of resources provided by TFS (8%), chores and duties at home (8%) and health problems (5%).

There was some indication that those in leadership positions agreed more strongly than others that perceived TFS bureaucracy and task complexity limited their involvement. Presumably, this is because those in leadership positions are more exposed to these factors.

Finding ways to reduce the impact of task complexity and perceived bureaucracy may be particularly helpful in any attempt to prevent volunteer turnover, and especially turnover among leaders. Shortening the terms of office, as suggested above, may also help in this respect.

Satisfactions from being a member of TFS

The majority of respondents indicated that they derived a number of satisfactions from being TFS volunteers. Well over 90% agreed that their volunteering allowed them to learn and apply new skills, contribute to the protection of their community, and feel a valued member of the community. In addition, close to 90% of respondents also agreed that they felt fully included in brigade activities and that they had a significant role to play in their brigade.

Those currently holding leadership positions agreed more strongly than others with almost all items concerning satisfactions derived from TFS membership. Leaders agreed more strongly than others that TFS volunteering offered the following benefits: being able to contribute to the protection of their community, feeling a valued member of the community, meeting new friends outside the brigade, and facing new experiences and challenges. Not surprisingly, high-ranking leaders also agreed more so than others that they felt fully included in brigade activities and that they had a significant role to play in their brigade.

It may be useful to consider providing leaders with some strategies to enhance perceptions among the rest of the brigade that they have significant roles to play, and can be more involved in decision making processes and brigade activities if they wish.

Factors that would make volunteering with TFS easier

Respondents were presented with a list of factors that could potentially make volunteering easier for them, including mentoring, enhancing employer understanding about the importance of the TFS, the opportunity to catch up on training or assessments at nearby brigades, not having to worry about property or family when turning out, a more harmonious brigade atmosphere, and having TFS activities take less of respondents' time. Consistent with the positive attitudes toward training courses for mentoring, a large proportion of respondents agreed that mentoring programs would make volunteering easier. Indeed, 70% agreed that volunteering would be easier if all members accepted mentoring for all roles and at all levels of the TFS. Similarly, close to 60% of respondents agreed that one-on-one mentoring to help new recruits in their first year would make volunteering easier. The extent to which respondents agreed that the other factors would make volunteering easier was less pronounced; approximately 50% of respondents agreed that it would be easier to volunteer if they could catch up at nearby brigade, and 40% agreed that enhancing their employer's understanding of TFS would make volunteering easier. Fewer respondents agreed that removing the worry about leaving one's property or family unprotected would make volunteering easier. Whether respondents felt that such concerns had little impact on their volunteering, or that there is little TFS could do to alleviate such concerns, remains a question for future research. About a third of respondents indicated that improving the brigade atmosphere and taking initiatives to reduce the amount of time devoted to TFS activities would make volunteering easier.

Comparisons of the ratings made by respondents in key leadership positions with those not occupying such positions revealed one interesting difference. Leaders were less inclined to agree that volunteering would be easier if the atmosphere in the brigade was more harmonious. It is likely that this difference is at least in part due to those in leadership positions perceiving fewer problems with the brigade atmosphere than other respondents.

As suggested earlier, it may therefore be of some benefit to include in any leadership development programs, some measures to help leaders (a) more accurately gauge the level of disharmony in their brigade, and (b) take appropriate actions to improve it. Given the very positive ratings of

mentoring, it would also be a good idea to consider ways of training leaders to initiate mentoring programs in their brigades.

Additional comments

In the final part of the survey respondents were asked to “write any other thoughts you have about TFS brigade leadership, leadership training, or District support for brigades.” The most prominent themes emerging in negative comments about leadership related to: (a) the inter-group relationship between career and volunteer members of the TFS, (b) brigade leaders, and (c) brigade politics and factionalism. The most frequently made comments about training suggested that respondents would appreciate more opportunities to take part in leadership training courses, and that they would like those in leadership positions to receive training in leadership skills. At the same time, however, a number of the respondents also complained that there has been too much bureaucracy in training requirements and courses.

Implications

The findings from the TFS Leadership Survey suggest that TFS volunteers generally evaluate the quality of brigade leadership positively, find their volunteering activities satisfying, and believe it likely that they will continue to volunteer with the TFS in the immediate future. The results also suggest that there is a large degree of consensus in views about the sorts of skills and behaviours that characterize good leadership. However, there is also evidence that evaluations of leadership performance vary according to whether or not respondents hold key leadership positions. Overall, those in leadership positions evaluated the behaviours of brigade leaders more favourably than did the other respondents. Nevertheless, respondents typically had very positive attitudes toward further development of leadership skills, and those in leadership positions did not appear to be any less supportive of such training. The areas in which programs to enhance the quality of leadership may be best focussed concern planning and organisation of training sessions, leader-member interactions, management of factionalism and brigade politics, and improving brigade harmony. It may also be particularly useful for leadership development programs to include some evaluation of whether the brigade may benefit from more regular rotation of leadership positions, and encouragement of succession planning. Finally, it may be useful to consider introducing strategies to minimise the burden of perceived bureaucracy that many leaders are finding limiting.

Recommendations

The results of this survey provide evidence that perceptions about the quality of leadership in one's brigade predict intentions to remain a volunteer with TFS. In addition, the results point to several specific types of leadership skills that would be particularly useful to include in a leadership development program aiming to improve perceptions of brigade-level leadership. These skills include (a) organisation and planning of training sessions so that volunteers are aware of the objectives of each training session and can see that those objectives are met, (b) conflict resolution and dealing with brigade politics, and (c) democratic leadership and succession planning. Leadership programs aimed at addressing issues with brigade politics and (un)democratic leadership practices would be particularly useful for suburban brigades, which appear to have more problems with these issues than other brigades. Leadership training is likely to be received most positively if it is (a) conducted by experts, (b) delivered locally, and (c) develops the skills necessary to implement on-the-job training and mentoring of future leaders, in the above areas.

In addition to developing leadership programs aimed at providing brigade leaders with the appropriate skills, it will be important for TFS to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of such

programs. A thorough evaluation of such programs would ideally be designed to measure the effectiveness of the program(s) at four levels, described by Kirkpatrick (1996) as reaction, learning, behaviour and results.

The reaction phase of assessment would involve measuring program participants' opinions about the program. In this phase, it will be important to determine whether participants believe that (a) the subject matter is relevant to their needs as brigade leaders, (b) the material covers the objectives of the course, (c) the material is delivered in an engaging manner, with for example, an appropriate combination of theory and practice involved, and (d) the person or persons delivering the material are adequately prepared and approachable. If participants do not evaluate the program positively there will be little chance of them implementing the desired changes.

However, it will also be important to evaluate the program at the level of learning. The evaluation of learning should involve measures of attitudes and knowledge (e.g., attitudes toward democratic leadership styles) before and after training among both the program participants and a control group (who do not receive the training).

In addition to establishing that the program is effective at the level of learning, an assessment of behaviour should also be conducted. Indeed, a leadership development program will be of little value if participants do not apply their learning.

The evaluations of behaviour would ideally be considered from the perspectives of multiple sources. It would be useful to collect information about leader behaviours not only from program participants themselves, but also from the volunteers they are expected to lead/serve, and if possible, their superiors (e.g., District Officers). Again, evaluations should involve measurements taken prior to participation in training as well as post training, and measurements of behaviours among both control and experimental groups at multiple points in time. As a further safeguard, the evaluation would be strengthened if steps were taken so that leader-raters (other than self-raters) were 'blind' to whether or not the leader being evaluated had taken part in the program or not (until completion of ratings). Importantly, post-training evaluations should be conducted after an appropriate interval of time, so that program participants have had time to implement changes and other volunteers' time to notice these changes. Additionally, steps should be taken to ensure that these measurements are presented among others unrelated to the program (to check that the evaluation task itself does not lead raters to respond in a particular way – this will help identify 'demand characteristics' of the task. Having some volunteers complete assessments multiple times and others completing assessments only during the pre or post phase would also help in this regard).

Finally, the results of the leadership program should be assessed. In this phase of the evaluation process it would be worthwhile comparing whether brigades receiving training differ from others (and their own pre-training states) in terms of brigade morale, satisfaction, commitment or intentions to remain, engagement, promotion of the organisation to others, and ultimately turnover.

In order to make the most confident conclusions about the effectiveness of the program(s) every effort should be made to ensure that brigades included in the evaluation phases of implementation are randomly selected from a variety of different types of brigades, and that control versus experimental brigades are as equivalent as possible in terms of characteristics such as career-volunteer composition, business, and demographic variables.

Results

Demographics and Brigade Characteristics

Gender

There was an excellent response rate to the gender question with 916 respondents (99%) answering this item. The results, shown in Table 1, indicate that less than one fifth (17.5%) of respondents were women. Comparison with TFS records (N = 4, 668) revealed that, in terms of gender, the survey sample was highly representative of the adult⁶ TFS volunteer membership (which comprises 15% women vs. 85% men).

Table 1 Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	756	82.5
Female	160	17.5
Total	916	100.0
Not Stated	7	
Total	923	

Age

Respondents were asked to provide their year of birth and a total of 839 (91%) did so. Respondents' age in 2009 was calculated from the year of birth data. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 84 years, with a median of 49 years. In comparison, TFS membership records indicate that the median age of adult members in 2009 is 45 years. The age distribution of survey respondents is shown Table 2 in 5-year groupings, and as a histogram in Figure 1.

Table 2 Age of respondents in 5-year groupings

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-19	5	0.6	0.6
20-24	30	3.6	4.2
25-29	48	5.7	9.9
30-34	49	8.5	15.7
35-39	73	8.7	24.4
40-44	88	10.5	34.9
45-49	127	15.1	50.1
50-54	119	14.2	64.2
55-59	103	12.3	76.5
60-64	113	13.5	90.0
65-69	56	6.8	96.8
70-74	17	2.0	98.8
75-79	7	0.8	99.6
80-84	3	0.4	100.0
Total	839	100.0	
Not Stated	84		
Total	923		

⁶ Because Age was calculated from year of birth only, the data is for volunteers aged 18 or over by December 31st 2009.

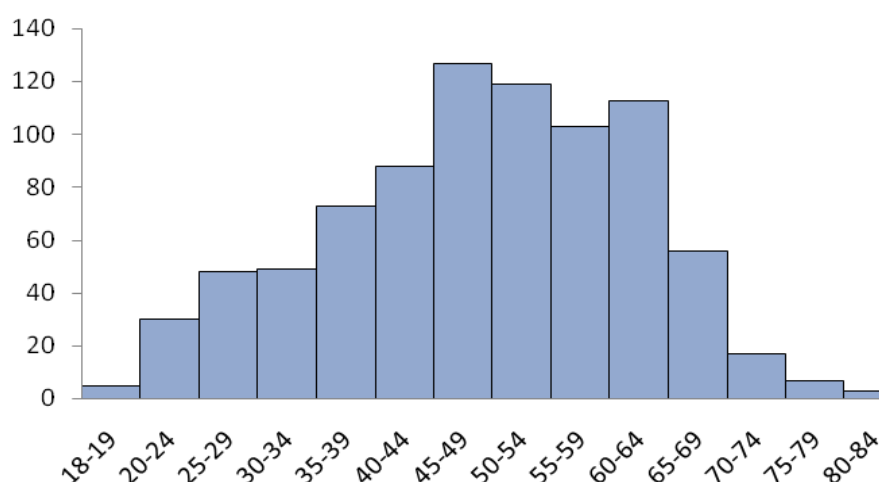


Figure 1 Histogram: Frequency of Respondents in 5-year Age Groupings

As shown in Figure 1, there were more respondents in the age groups from 45 to 64 than any other age groupings. In Table 3 and Figure 2⁷, the age distribution of survey respondents 18 years and over is compared with the age distribution of TFS volunteers (according to TFS records) and the age distribution of adult Tasmanians (calculated from 2006 census data; ABS 2007a). In all data sets only those 18 years or older have been included in the analysis.

Table 3 Age of Respondents compared with Age in Tasmania (18+) and Age in TFS (18+)

Age	Percent of Respondents	Percent of TFS Volunteers (18+ only)	Percent of Tasmanians (18+ only)
18-19	0.6	3.6	3.4
20-24	3.6	8.3	8.0
25-29	5.7	7.3	7.0
30-34	8.5	8.9	8.0
35-39	8.7	10.0	9.0
40-44	10.5	11.4	9.5
45-49	15.1	13.3	10.0
50-54	14.2	11.1	9.35
55-59	12.3	9.7	9.0
60-64	13.5	8.5	7.2
65-69	6.8	4.9	5.8
70-74	2.0	1.7	4.6
75-79	0.8	0.7	4.0
80-84	0.4	0.3	3.0
85+	0.0	0.1	2.4

⁷ Although line charts are typically reserved for continuous rather than categorical data, the figure has been produced as an aid to quickly making age comparisons. It should be noted that the lower percentage of respondents in the 18-19 years category is at least partly if not wholly due to the fact that this age category is half the width of the others (organised in 5 year rather than 2 year groupings).

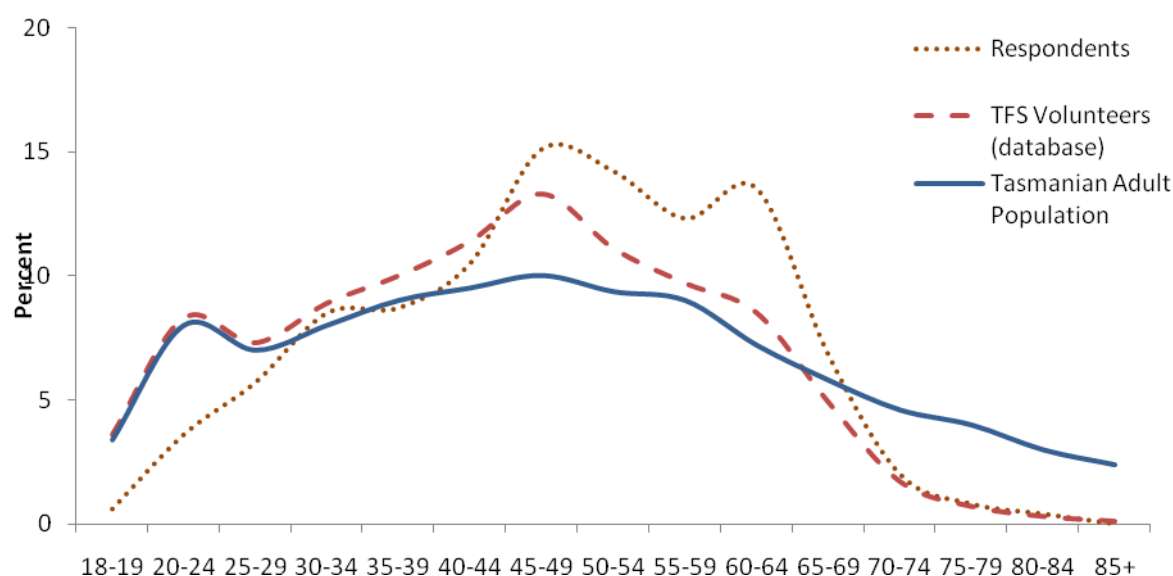


Figure 2 Line chart: Age of respondents compared with TFS and ABS data

Overall, the age distribution of respondents was quite similar to that of TFS volunteer records, particularly in the 30-44 years age ranges. It is worth noting that those in the 45-64 years age groups were particularly well-represented in the survey sample, perhaps due in part to a relatively higher number of leadership positions being occupied by volunteers in these age groups⁸. Volunteers younger than 30 years, however, were somewhat underrepresented among respondents relative to both TFS records and ABS data. This is perhaps attributable to greater interest in the survey from those in leadership positions (who, not surprisingly, tend to be older).

According to TFS records, the age distribution of volunteers is highly representative of Tasmania's adult population, although volunteers in the 40-54 years age groups are slightly overrepresented, and those over 70 underrepresented. Presumably, age becomes an important factor in the decision to withdraw from participation in TFS from the age of about 70 years.

The average age for male and female respondents was compared. Results indicated that the age of male respondents ($M = 49.26$, $SD = 12.85$) was significantly greater than the age of female respondents ($M = 45.84$, $SD = 13.37$)⁹. One possible explanation for this difference relates to the shorter lengths of service recorded among women respondents. That is, the younger median age for women may be attributed to their leaving TFS earlier than men, on average.

Length of Service

Respondents were asked to indicate in which year they joined the TFS. Responses ranged from 1950 to 2008, therefore indicating that the length of service (in 2009) ranged from 1 to 59 years, with a median of 12 years (7 years for women and 14 years for men).

The years of service contributed by survey respondents was compared with years of service contributed by all TFS volunteers (from TFS records, including only those 18 years of age or over in the analysis). The median length of service according to TFS records was 9 years (5 years for women, 9 for men). This suggests that particularly dedicated volunteers were well-represented in the survey, while the views of others are somewhat under-represented.

⁸ See Table 8.

⁹, $t(836) = 2.98$, $p = .003$

The median length of service among active and non-active members was similar (11 years among non-active respondents, and 12 years among active respondents). The median length of service was also equivalent across community types (rural = 11 years, small town = 13 years, suburban = 11 years).

Age when Joined TFS

The age at which respondents joined the TFS was calculated by subtracting the year born from year joined. This calculation was possible for the 797 respondents (86.3%) who answered both items. According to this estimate four respondents indicated joining the TFS before they were 12 years old, while one joined at age 70 years. However, the median age at joining TFS was 33 years (32 for men, 36 for women). One explanation as to why women join later in life than men may be related to child-rearing practices. More specifically, it may be the case that a greater number of women than men delay joining the fire service until their children have passed the first few years of life. This is consistent with data from a survey of community attitudes toward volunteering in another Australian fire service, NSW RFS (Birch & McLennan, 2006, p. 21), which found 35% of women compared with 13% of men indicated that not having anyone to mind the children was a barrier to joining. Moreover, the report showed that this barrier was particularly marked for women aged in their early 20s to late 40s.

Consistent with the older age of male respondents, men indicated that they had joined the TFS at an earlier age ($M = 33.54$, $SD = 13.28$) than women ($M = 36.15$, $SD = 11.79$)¹⁰. However, the age at which respondents first joined the TFS alone cannot account for the greater length of service calculated for male versus female respondents¹¹.

The age at which respondents reported joining TFS varied by community type¹², with a greater median age among respondents from rural communities versus small towns versus suburban communities (Medians = 36, 32 and 28 years, respectively). The older age of joining in rural communities is likely attributable to the greater percentage of older persons in these communities generally.

Membership Type

Respondents were asked, “Are you an active or non-active member?” This item was answered by 907 respondents (98.3%), 861 (94.9%) of whom indicated that they were active members. This left 42 (4.5%) indicating that they were non-active members (i.e., non-operational and non-voting), and 4 respondents failing to indicate membership type.

Although a greater proportion of both male and female respondents were classified active members, a greater percentage of women (12.3%) than men (3.7%) indicated that they were non-active members¹³. This is consistent with previous surveys, typically showing a greater proportion of men than women in firefighting roles (e.g., Beatson et al., 2008).

Age-based comparisons indicated that the proportion of active members in each age group declined very gradually, with a drop from 100% of those under 20 years classified active to 93% of those 60-69 years classified active. Among those aged 70 years or more, the proportion of active members was still high (77%), though somewhat lower than in other age groups. These differences are shown in Table 4.

¹⁰ $t(794) = 2.18$, $p = .03$

¹¹ $t(804) = 5.95$, $p < .001$

¹² $\chi^2(2, N=742)=44.49$, $p<0.001$

¹³ $\chi^2(1, N=906)=20.00$, $p<0.001$

Table 4 Age by Membership Type

Age	Active		Non-Active	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
18-19	5	100	0	0.0
20-29	74	97.4	2	2.6
30-39	118	96.7	4	3.3
40-49	205	96.7	7	3.3
50-59	211	95.5	10	4.5
60-69	155	92.3	13	7.7
70+	20	76.9	6	23.1

Membership type did not vary with community type. That is, there was no evidence that one type of community was characterized by a greater percentage of non-active members than any other type of community, despite rural communities being characterized by an older membership.

Non-active members

It is perhaps worth noting here that the term ‘non-active’ is not particularly flattering, and to some extent implies that the contributions made by non-operational members are undervalued. The implied lower status of the group (and lack of voice in the voting process) is unlikely to encourage these members to invest much of their time or energy in the non-operational roles that are nevertheless critical to the effective functioning of a fire service. Certainly, there was evidence in this survey that intentions to remain (in both 12 months¹⁴ and 3 years¹⁵ time) varied according to membership-type. Overall, non-active members were less likely than active members to continue with TFS. For example, whereas 84% of active members rated it very likely that they would continue with TFS in 12 months time, only 40% of non-active members did so. Similarly, while 67% of active members thought it very likely they would continue in 3 years time, 24% of non-active members did so.

Importantly, older age and poorer health of non-active members does not account for the differences in intentions to remain. The reasons that do account for the differences are difficult to assess given the small number of non-active respondents in this survey sample (n = 42). However, preliminary comparisons did indicate that non-active members rated several aspects of their experience with the brigade and leadership in their brigade less positively than did active members. Statistically significant differences¹⁶ indicating less satisfaction among non-active members emerged on the following items¹⁷: The brigade lets me know what’s going on; I am included in the group by all members of my brigade; Brigade officers and members treat each other with respect; I have not been bullied in my brigade; I have not been harassed in my brigade; Elections are fair, open and honest; Conflict between members is rare; New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities; Brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member; The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another; Leadership in my brigade is very good; Volunteering in my brigade is very satisfying for me; I remain because I enjoy most aspects of being in the TFS; I remain because I hope to become an officer in the brigade some day; Being a volunteer allows me to learn new things and apply new skills; As a TFS volunteer I can contribute to protecting my community; I am fully included in brigade activities; and I feel as though I have a significant role to play in my brigade. In addition, non-active members indicated more so than active members that their participation was often limited by health problems and internal brigade politics.

¹⁴ $\chi^2(4, N=846)=80.21, p<0.001$

¹⁵ $\chi^2(4, N=895)=59.39, p<0.001$

¹⁶ Using Mann-Whitney U comparisons at $p < .01$

¹⁷ Due to the very small sample of non-active members, cross-tabulations are not reported.

Although non-active members make up a relatively small proportion of most brigades (i.e., less than 20% of the brigade is non-active in 75% of TFS brigades), it may be beneficial to conduct further research with this group of volunteers to better understand (a) what the kinds of non-operational contributions they can and do make to their brigades, and (b) what kinds of initiatives might need to be put in place to improve their experiences with TFS, so that (c) efforts to recruit members of the community to non-operational volunteer roles (such as fund-raising, administration, and community education) are not undermined by a brigade climate that is less welcoming of such members.

Formal Positions Held

Respondents were asked if they had *ever* held the following positions: Group Officer, Brigade Chief, First Officer, or Leading Firefighter. In addition, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they *currently* held one of these positions, and if so, to indicate which one. In the 11 cases where respondents indicated that they currently held more than one of these positions, the highest ranking position was entered in the database. Table 5 shows the number and percentage of respondents indicating that they had held one of the four listed leadership positions within the TFS, while Table 6 shows the number and percentage of respondents indicating the highest position *currently* held.

Table 5 Positions held to date

Position	Frequency	Percent
Group Officer	30	3.3
Brigade Chief	107	11.6
First Officer	121	13.2
Leading Firefighter	245	26.7

Because respondents could indicate multiple leadership positions, the number of respondents who had held at least one of the above-listed leadership positions is *not* the sum of the positions presented in Table 5. Rather the total number of respondents having held at least one of the above leadership positions was 333 (36%).

Table 6 Highest position currently held

Position	Frequency of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Group Officer	20	2.2
Brigade Chief	81	8.8
First Officer ¹⁸	45	4.9
Leading Firefighter	179	19.5
Sub-Total	325	35.2

According to TFS records, 215 of 4181 adult volunteers hold the most senior volunteer rank in their brigade (5.1%). Thus, it appears to be the case that volunteers in high-ranking leadership positions were especially responsive to the survey (comprising 15.9% of respondents). The high representation of those in leadership positions is consistent with response patterns in previous surveys (e.g., Birch, McLennan, Beatson & Kelly, 2008)

¹⁸ TFS staff expressed some concern that the number of respondents indicating that they had held the rank of 1st Officer (at some time and currently) was too high. This may be attributed to some confusion among respondents about the terms 1st Officer and Brigade Chief. In focus group discussions following the survey, some TFS volunteers said others may have thought that the box on the survey for 1st Officer meant 2nd Officer (since 1st Officer and Chief are equivalent in terms of volunteer seniority). Thus, some 2nd Officers may have incorrectly ticked 1st Officer.

Leadership Position and Length of Service

Table 7 shows the range and median length of service for each of the four listed positions. As would be expected, higher ranking positions tend to be occupied by those with more years of service.

Table 7 Range and median Length of Service for each position currently held

Position	Frequency	Range	Median Length of Service
Group Officer	20	9-41 years	30 years
Brigade Chief	81	3-46 years	24 years
First Officer	45	2-47 years	19 years
Leading Firefighter	179	1-59 years	16 years
None of the above	598	1-57 years	8 years

Age and Leadership Positions

It was assumed that age would be related to whether or not members held high-ranking leadership positions. Earlier, it was noted that respondents in the 40-64 years age groups were particularly responsive to the survey, and it was suggested that this may be in part due to larger numbers of leaders in these age groups, relative to other age groups. Table 8 shows the number of Brigade Chiefs in each age group, according to the survey and TFS records. According to both sets of data, the proportion of Brigade Chiefs is higher among the 40-64 years age groups. That is, most serving chiefs (>65%) tend to be 40-64 years of age. The median was 50 years according to TFS records, and 52 years according to the survey sample.

Table 8 Age by Currently Holds rank of Chief

Age	TFS records		Survey sample	
	Number of Chiefs	Percent of Chiefs	Number of Chiefs	Percent of Chiefs
18-19	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-24	0	0.0	0	0.0
25-29	1	0.5	1	1.4
30-34	10	5.0	2	2.8
35-39	15	7.5	4	5.6
40-44	24	11.9	11	15.5
45-49	43	21.4	14	19.7
50-54	32	15.9	10	14.1
55-59	23	11.4	12	16.9
60-64	27	13.4	8	11.3
65-69	18	9.0	9	12.7
70-74	6	3.0	0	0.0
75-79	1	0.5	0	0.0
80-84	1	0.5	0	0.0
85+	0	0.0	0	0.0

Gender and Leadership Positions

A series of analyses were also conducted to test whether leadership positions varied by gender. To control for gender differences in membership type, only those indicating that they were active members were included in analyses. As shown in Table 9 a greater percentage of male than female respondents had held each of the four positions listed in the survey. This is consistent with TFS records of 4181 adult volunteers which indicate that a greater percentage of men (5.5%) than women (1.1%) hold the rank of Brigade Chief.

That a greater percentage of men than women occupy leadership positions is consistent with other research in both the paid (Oakley, 2000) and volunteer sectors (e.g., Rotolo & Wilson, 2007), despite evidence that female leaders tend to score higher than men on leadership styles that relate positively to leader effectiveness (e.g., transformational leadership; see Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

Table 9 Position by Gender

Position	Ever Held		Currently Holding	
	% of Men	% of Women	% of Men	% of Women
Group Officer	3.5%	1.5%	2.5%	1.0%
Brigade Chief	13.2%	4.4% ¹⁹	10.5%	2.9% ²⁰
First Officer	15.1%	2.9% ²¹	5.8%	1.9% ²²
Leading Firefighter	29.1%	17.0% ²³	20.5%	18.5%

It is worth noting, however, that logistic regression analyses show the gender differences in TFS leadership positions became non-significant when length of service was controlled. Nevertheless, one must be cautious about the implications of this finding; the reason for gender differences in length of service, rather than length of service *per se*, should be considered in any adequate explanation for the gender differences in leadership roles. One explanation accounting for some of the difference in length of service has to do with feelings of inclusion. As might be expected given previous surveys of volunteer firefighters (e.g., Beatson et al., 2008 found men agreed more strongly than women that they felt accepted and appreciated by others in the brigade) men agreed more strongly than women that they felt included in the group²⁴, and these feelings significantly predict length of service²⁵. Other differences, such as concern with meeting family responsibilities, are also likely to contribute to the divide in length of service.

In addition to the four listed positions, respondents were also asked to indicate any other formal brigade or TFS positions (a) ever held, and (b) currently held. A total of 252 respondents (27.3%) listed 367 other formal positions held. It is interesting to note that, of these, 22 respondents listed “Firefighter.” It is highly likely that most survey respondents were also firefighters, particularly given that 95% of the sample indicated that they were active members. Presumably, most respondents interpreted the item as a request to indicate any formal positions *other* than firefighter or the four positions previously listed. Thus, the percentages calculated in Table 10 exclude the 22 cases indicating, “Firefighter”. As shown in Table 10 the most frequently nominated other formal positions ever held were 2nd, 3rd and 4th Officer, accounting for more than 60% of the positions listed. Secretarial and Treasury positions accounted for just over 13% of those listed.

¹⁹ $\chi^2(1, N=857)=8.31, p=0.004$

²⁰ $\chi^2(1, N=860)=7.5, p=0.005$

²¹ $\chi^2(1, N=857)=14.62, p<0.001$

²² $\chi^2(1, N=860)=4.4, p=0.035$

²³ $\chi^2(1, N=857)=8.34, p=0.004$

²⁴ The item used in this analysis was “I am included in the group by all members of my brigade”

TFS Leadership Survey

Table 10 Other Formal Positions Held to Date

Position (descending in order of frequency)	Frequency	% Positions	% Respondents
3 rd Officer	91	26.4	9.9
4 th Officer	71	20.6	7.7
2 nd Officer	55	15.9	6.0
Secretary	28	8.1	3.0
Training Instructor	24	7.0	2.6
Treasurer	18	5.2	2.0
Permit Officer	17	4.9	1.8
Safety Officer	14	4.1	1.5
Equipment Maintenance	10	2.9	1.1
Assoc/Committee Rep	8	2.3	0.9
TFS employee	6	1.7	0.7
5 th -8 th Officer	2	0.6	0.2
Juniors Coordinator	1	0.3	0.1
Total Positions and Respondents		345	923

A total of 322 respondents (34.9%) listed 377 other formal positions currently held. Again, the most frequently nominated position was Firefighter, listed by 77 respondents (24%). Interestingly, several respondents further qualified their position as a firefighter; for example, “just a lowly firefighter” and “proud firefighter” and “volunteer firefighter”. It is unclear why these respondents specified this (presumably most common) position but others did not. Some may feel that the position is especially important but insufficiently recognized. Nevertheless, we assumed that most respondents would also be firefighters, and excluded those 77 responses from the calculations provided in the table below. Second to fourth Officer positions were the next most frequently nominated, again followed by administrative and training positions.

TFS Leadership Survey

Table 11 Other Formal Positions Currently Held

Position	Frequency	% Positions	% Respondents
3 rd Officer	46	15.3	5.0
2 nd Officer	43	14.3	4.7
4 th Officer	42	14.0	4.6
Permit Officer	35	11.7	3.8
Secretary	25	8.3	2.7
Training Instructor	20	6.7	2.2
Safety Officer	19	6.3	2.1
Volunteer	18	6.0	2.0
Treasurer	17	5.7	1.8
Assoc/Committee Rep	13	4.3	1.4
Juniors Coordinator	8	2.7	0.9
TFS employee	4	1.3	0.4
Communications	2	0.7	0.2
Equipment/Maintenance	1	0.3	0.1
5 th -8 th Officer	1	0.3	0.1
Station Officer	1	0.3	0.1
Brigade Historian	1	0.3	0.1
Logistics Officer	1	0.3	0.1
Records Officer	1	0.3	0.1
Catering	1	0.3	0.1
Social Events Coordinator	1	0.3	0.1
Total Positions and Respondents		300	923

For comparison, the ranks of 4181 adult volunteers (according to the available TFS records) are presented in Table 12. It is worth noting that there is some discrepancy between TFS records of member rankings and the results from this survey. Note that according to TFS records, 14 volunteers hold the rank of First Officer. Yet, according to respondents' answers on the leadership survey, at least 45 volunteers must hold this rank. It is likely that this discrepancy is due to differences in the title applied to volunteers in different types of brigades; in composite brigades (including both career and volunteer personnel), and volunteer brigades serving an area covered by career brigades, the most senior volunteer is called the 1st Officer. It may be the case that 31 Second Officers incorrectly ticked 1st officer (45 First Officers in survey minus 14 First Officer according to TFS records).

Summing the number First Officers, Brigade Chiefs and Group Officers indicates that 146 of 215 Chiefs and First Officers (no Group Officers were included in TFS records) responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 67.9% from volunteers in high-ranking positions²⁶.

In contrast, the response rate from those holding the rank of member or volunteer firefighter was much lower. According to TFS records, 3185 volunteers are classified as members or volunteer firefighters. According to the survey results 448 respondents were volunteers who held no other formal position in TFS

²⁶ If it is assumed that 31 respondents holding the rank of 2nd Officer ticked 1st Officer (due to confusion arising from the different titles applied in composite and non-composite brigades), this percentage drops to 53.4% ($(146-31 = 115, 115/215 = 53.4)$)

TFS Leadership Survey

(this estimate is based on the 448 respondents who did not indicate that they currently held a leadership position in either the tick-box or free-response items). This suggests that 14% of TFS volunteers holding the rank of member or volunteer firefighter responded to this survey. This estimate is likely to be somewhat conservative, due to the indirect estimation of rank which was reliant on *non*-responses. However, even the response rate of those *not* holding high-ranking positions (1st Officer and above) was comparatively low. According to TFS data, there are 4081 volunteers holding some rank other than Junior, Cadet, or Resignation. Of these volunteers, 3866 do not hold the rank of 1st Officers or Brigade Chief or Group Officer. According to survey data 146 respondents held high ranking positions (1st Officer, Brigade Chief or Group Officer), leaving 777 respondents not in high ranking positions. Thus, the response rate of those *not* in high-ranking leadership positions was 20% (777/3866).

Table 12 Primary ranks of volunteers according to TFS records

Rank	Frequency	Percent
Volunteer Firefighter	2649	64.9
Member	536	13.1
Second Officer	206	5.0
Brigade Chief	201	4.9
Third Officer	184	4.5
Fourth Officer	146	3.6
Leading Firefighter	135	3.3
First Officer	14	0.3
Permit Officer	7	0.2
Secretary	1	<0.1
Fifth Officer	1	<0.1
OH&S Brigade Contact	1	<0.1
Total	4081	100.0

Operational vs. Non-Operational Leaders

Table 13 shows the frequency and percentage of respondents who had held operational and/or non-operational leadership positions. The following positions were coded as Operational: Group Officer, Brigade Chief, 1st Officer, 2nd Officer, 3rd Officer, 4th Officer, and Leading Firefighter. Non-operational positions included: Secretary, Treasurer, Association Representative, Permit Officer, Safety Officer, Training Instructor, Communications and Equipment Maintenance Officer.

Table 13 Operational vs. Non-Operational Positions Held

Positions Held	Ever		Currently	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Operational Only	396	42.9%	364	39.4%
Non-Operational Only	21	2.3%	27	2.9%
Both Types	138	15.0%	84	9.1%
Total Operational	534	57.9%	448	48.5%
Total Non-Operational	159	17.2%	111	12.0%
Total Operational OR Non-Operational	555	60.1%	475	51.5%
No position specified	368	39.9%	448	48.5%

As shown in Table 13, a large proportion (58%) of the respondents had held an operational leadership position at some point in time, and almost half of the respondents currently held an operational leadership position (49%). In comparison, relatively few respondents held non-operational leadership positions (12% currently, 17% ever). It is also worth noting that the majority of respondents holding non-operational leadership positions also held operational positions. Indeed, 87% of those who had ever held a non-operational leadership position had also held an operational position (138/159). Similarly, of those currently

occupying non-operational positions 76% also held an operational leadership position (84/111). Due to the very small number of respondents holding non-operational positions only, further comparisons between operational and non-operational leaders were not explored (except those for age and gender²⁷). However, comparisons between those currently holding leadership positions versus those not currently holding leadership positions are reported. It should be noted that only 6% of those currently occupying a leadership position indicated that the position was non-operational only.

At first glance it may seem odd that there were more respondents indicating they currently held only a non-operational leadership position than those indicating that they had ever held a non-operational position only. However, a number of those who currently held a non-operational position only had previously held operational positions (and thus could not be classified as having only non-operational positions ever).

Country of Birth

Respondents were asked, “Were you born in Australia?” Of the 903 respondents (97.8%) who provided an answer, 805 (89.1%) ticked “Yes” and 98 (10.9%) ticked “No”, indicating that they were born overseas. In comparison, ABS (2007b) data from the 2006 census suggest that 20% of adults living in Tasmania were born overseas. The discrepancy between TFS volunteer membership and State-wide statistics is consistent with the situation in other Australian fire services (e.g., Birch et al., 2008; Beatson, Birch & McLennan, 2008).

Respondents born overseas were asked, “What year did you arrive in Australia?” Ninety-three of the 98 respondents (94.9%) indicating that they were born overseas, answered this question. The earliest year of arrival was 1944, and the latest, 2005. The median year of arrival was 1966. That is, 50% of those born overseas had resided in Australia for more than 40 years. A total of 91 respondents answered the question, “What country were you born in?” As shown in Table 14, almost two thirds of respondents born overseas were from English speaking countries. Consistent with ABS data for Tasmania, the most commonly nominated country of birth, other than Australia, was the United Kingdom.

²⁷ There was no evidence of any age or gender differences in those having held operational-only versus non-operational only positions.

Table 14 Country of Birth

Country	Frequency	Percent
United Kingdom N.E.C.	33	36.3
England	11	12.1
Switzerland	7	7.7
Netherlands	6	6.6
Germany	4	4.4
Ireland	3	3.3
New Zealand	3	3.3
Sweden	3	3.3
Canada	2	2.2
Italy	2	2.2
Papua New Guinea	2	2.2
Scotland	2	2.2
South Africa	2	2.2
United States of America	2	2.2
Croatia	1	1.1
Denmark	1	1.1
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	1	1.1
Malaysia	1	1.1
Norway	1	1.1
Sierra Leone	1	1.1
Southern Europe N.E.C.	1	1.1
Sri Lanka	1	1.1
Wales	1	1.1
Total	91	100.0

Interestingly, the percentage of respondents born overseas varied by community type²⁸, such that 13% of rural-, 10% of small town-, and 3% of urban-respondents indicated that they were born overseas. This difference is quite unexpected given general trends indicating higher percentages of immigrants being concentrated in larger communities.

There was no evidence of any gender difference in the percentage of respondents born overseas.

²⁸ $\chi^2(2, N=839)=12.39, p=.002$

Employment Status

Respondents were asked, “What is your employment status?” and were asked to tick as many of the categories presented in Table 15 as were applicable.

Table 15 Employment Status

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Full time employee	419	45.6%
Retired	150	16.6%
Part time employee	132	14.4%
Farm owner without employees	113	12.3%
Business owner without employees	98	10.6%
Home duties	78	8.5%
Parent caring for children under 18	68	7.4%
Business owner with employees	42	4.6%
Farm owner with employees	38	4.1%
Unemployed	33	3.6%
Student	22	2.4%

Overall, 80.8% of respondents indicated that they were in the workforce in some capacity (i.e. full time employee, part time employee, farm- or business-owner). The percentage of those in the workforce was 81.9% for men, and 77.5% for women. Of those respondents who did not indicate their gender, the rate was 42.3%.

The employment categories were cross-tabulated with gender (see Table 16, below) and further analyses indicated significant gender differences in the proportion of those employed on a full time basis²⁹, part time basis³⁰ engaged in home duties³¹, caring for children under 18 years³², studying³³, and those owning a farm with employees³⁴. While a greater proportion of male respondents were employed full time or were farm owners with employees, a greater proportion of women than men were engaged in part time work, child minding responsibilities, home duties, and studying commitments. This is consistent with other surveys of fire service volunteers showing a greater proportion of female than male respondents engaged in part time work and care for children (e.g., Beatson et al., 2008).

²⁹ $\chi^2(1, N=912)=11.91, p =0.001$

³⁰ $\chi^2(1, N=912)=17.76, p <0.001$

³¹ $\chi^2(1, N=912)=72.16, p <0.001$

³² $\chi^2(1, N=912)=16.98, p =0.001$

³³ $\chi^2(1, N=913)=13.63, p <0.001$

³⁴ $\chi^2(1, N=913)=6.03, p =0.014$

Table 16 Employment Status by Gender

Employment status	Men	Women
*Full time employee	48.3%	33.3%
Retired	16.8%	12.5%
*Part time employee	12.2%	25.2%
Farm owner without employees	11.9%	13.2%
Business owner without employees	10.3%	11.9%
*Home duties	4.8%	25.3%
*Parent caring for children under 18	5.7%	15.1%
Business owner with employees	4.6%	4.4%
*Farm owner with employees	4.9%	0.6%
Unemployed	3.3%	4.4%
*Student	1.5%	6.3%

ABS census data generally show similar differences in the employment status of men and women in Tasmania (ABS 2007c). For example, among those 15 years or older, the rate of full time employment is 44% for males (vs. 48% in TFSLS [TFS Leadership Survey]) and 21% for females (vs. 33% in TFSLS), while the rate of part time employment is 11% for males (vs. 12% in TFSLS) and 24% for females (vs. 25% in TFSLS).

It is interesting to note that the percentage of women respondents engaged in full time employment (33.3%) is noticeably higher than the rate of women employed full time according to ABS statistics for Tasmania (21% for those 15 and over, 22% for those over 20 years of age). The reason for this is unclear.

There was some indication that some employment status categories varied by community type, in predictable ways. Whereas 6% of respondents in rural communities were farm owners with employees, less than 1% of those in the other two types of community owned farms³⁵. Also, 19% of rural respondents indicated that they owned a farm without employees, 4% of those in small towns did so, and less than 1% of those in suburban areas did so³⁶. Retirees made up 18% of rural respondents, 16% of those in small towns, and 8% of those in suburban communities³⁷. Finally, whereas 36% of rural respondents indicated that they were employed full time, 52% of those in small towns and 64% of those in suburban communities did so³⁸.

Local Community

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their local community was (a) “a suburb of a large city or large town”, (b) “a small town”, or (c) “a small rural community”. Of the 852 respondents (92.3%) answering this question, 510 (59.9%) indicated that their local community was a small rural community, 188 (22.1%) indicated that their local community was a small town, and 154 (18.1%) indicated that the local community was a suburb of a large city or large town. This may reflect the overall population of TFS volunteers, but may also suggest that those in small rural communities are (a) more available to volunteer with fewer work commitments, (b) more aware of volunteer shortages in their local fire brigades, and/or (c) more vulnerable to and consequently aware of the threat bushfires pose. Certainly, there is some evidence consistent with each of these explanations; the percentage of retirees was in higher rural communities, volunteers in rural brigades estimated fewer active members, and a higher percentage of respondents from rural communities agreed that they remained in TFS to protect their houses than assets.

³⁵ $\chi^2(2, N=852)=18.75, p < .001$

³⁶ $\chi^2(2, N=851)=50.69, p < .001$

³⁷ $\chi^2(2, N=852)=9.38, p = .009$

³⁸ $\chi^2(2, N=852)=41.29, p < .001$

Further comparisons showed age related differences in the proportion of respondents living in each type of community. Table 17 shows the percentage of respondents in each age group living in each type of community. More than two thirds of respondents over 50 years of age indicated that they lived in a small rural community. In comparison, approximately half of those under 40 years did so. In contrast, the proportion of younger respondents living in suburban areas was greater than the proportion of older respondents doing so. This trend is consistent with reports that the proportion of young adults in rural communities has been declining as they move to larger towns to pursue opportunities for employment and further education (Kenyon, Sercombe, Black, Lhuede, O'Mears, & White, 2001).

Table 17 Age by Type of Community

Age	A suburb of a city or large town		A small town		A small rural community		Total	Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
18-19	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	5	100
20-29	24	32.4	12	16.2	38	51.4	74	100
30-39	36	30.8	32	27.4	49	41.9	117	100
40-49	36	18.3	40	20.3	121	61.4	197	100
50-59	23	11.0	46	22.0	140	66.9	209	100
60-69	13	8.4	35	22.7	106	68.8	154	100
70+	1	4.34	6	26.1	16	69.6	23	100

Looked at slightly differently, Table 18 and Figure 3 show the percentage of respondents in each type of community who are a given age. Whereas the median age of respondents in suburban communities was 41 years, the median age of volunteers in small towns was 50 years, and 51 years in small rural communities. This suggests that difficulties associated with an aging membership will be felt more strongly and sooner among small towns and rural areas than suburban communities.

Table 18 Type of Community by Age

Age	A suburban city or large town		A small town		A small rural community	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<20	2	1.5	2	1.2	1	0.2
20-29	24	17.8	12	6.9	38	8.1
30-39	36	26.7	32	18.5	49	10.4
40-49	36	26.7	40	23.1	121	25.7
50-59	23	17.0	46	26.6	140	29.7
60-69	13	9.6	35	20.2	106	22.5
70+	1	0.7	6	3.5	16	3.4
Total	135	100	173	100	471	100

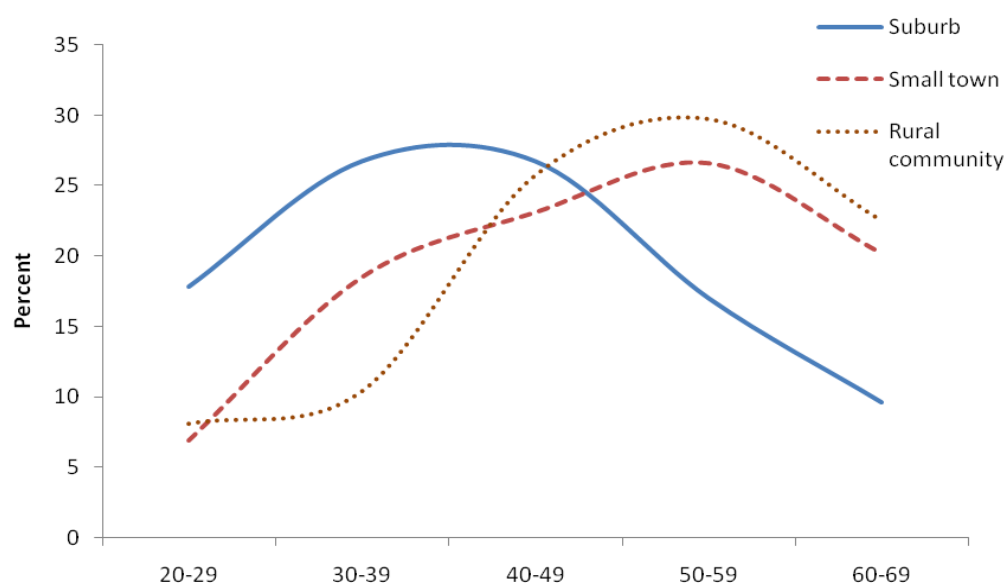


Figure 3 Line chart: Age of respondents by Community Type

As shown in the figure above, a greater percentage of respondents from small towns and rural communities than suburban communities tended to be 50 years or older. In contrast, the percentage of younger respondents (i.e., less than 40 years of age) was higher among the suburban sub-sample than other community types.

Cross-tabulating Gender by Community Type revealed no significant differences. That is, the proportion of male to female members was consistent across rural communities, small towns, and suburban communities.

Type of Housing

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they lived in (a) “a suburban house/flat/unit”, (b) “on a lifestyle block < 20 ha” or (c) “on a working farm”. A total of 890 (96.4%) respondents selected one of these options, with 413 (46.4%) indicating that they lived in a suburban house, flat or unit. Of the remainder, 301 (32.6%) indicated that they lived on lifestyle blocks of less than 20 hectares, and 176 (19.8%) indicated that they lived on a working farm.

As shown in Table 19, there was some indication that the type of housing occupied varied with respondent age. Consistent with the analysis of age by type of community, cross-tabulating age by type of housing showed that the proportion of younger respondents residing in a suburban house, flat, or unit was noticeably greater than the proportion of older respondents in such housing.

Table 19 Age by Type of Housing

Age	A suburban house/flat/unit		Lifestyle block < 20ha		A working farm		Total	Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
<20	3	60.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	5	100
20-29	52	69.3	15	20.0	8	10.7	75	100
30-39	62	51.2	39	32.2	20	16.5	121	100
40-49	89	41.8	84	39.4	40	18.8	213	100
50-59	86	40.2	73	34.1	55	25.7	214	100
60-69	69	42.3	57	35.0	37	22.7	163	100
70+	12	50.0	6	25.0	6	25.0	24	100

Region

Respondents were asked to indicate their TFS Region, and 913 (98.9%) did so. As shown in Table 20, the percentage of responses from each Region parallels the percentage of volunteers in each Region, according to the available records.

Table 20 Region by Survey Sample and TFS Records

Region	Survey Sample		TFS Records	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Southern	385	42.2	1,729	41.4
Northern	335	36.7	1480	35.4
North Western	193	21.1	972	23.2

Region was cross-tabulated with community type³⁹. As shown in the tables below, the majority of respondents in each Region were from rural communities. However, the percentage of rural respondents was higher among those from the Northern Region than the other two Regions, and the percentage of respondents from suburban communities much lower in the Northern than Southern Region. In Table 21 percentages are calculated so that they sum to 100% for each Region (i.e., horizontal line). Table 22 presents the percentage of respondents from each type of community.

Table 21 Percent of Respondents from each type of community by Region

Region	Rural		Small Town		Suburb		Total
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
Southern	199	55.4%	58	16.1%	102	28.4%	359
Northern	208	68.2%	72	23.6%	25	8.2%	305
North Western	98	54.1%	58	32.0%	25	13.8%	181

Looked at slightly differently, Table 22 shows most of the suburban respondents were from the Southern Region (67%), whereas more of the rural respondents were from the Southern and Northern Regions than from the North West.

Table 22 Community Type by Region

Region	Rural		Small Town		Suburb	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Southern	199	39.4%	58	30.8%	102	67.1%
Northern	208	41.2%	72	38.3%	25	16.4%
North Western	98	19.4%	58	30.8%	25	16.4%
Total	505	100%	188	100%	152	100%

³⁹ $\chi^2(6, N=845)=61.52, p < .001$

Brigade Membership Profile

Respondents were asked to indicate how many active and non-active members were currently in their brigade. A total of 808 (97.5%) respondents estimated the number of active members, while 552 (59.8%) provided an estimate of the number of non-active members. This difference in response rates probably indicates that a large proportion of respondents belonged to brigades where all members were considered active, or respondents were unaware of the number of non-active members.

The number of active members estimated ranged from 1 to 42, with a median of 15. As shown in Figure 4, the majority of respondents answering this item estimated that their brigade comprised between 6 and 20 active members.

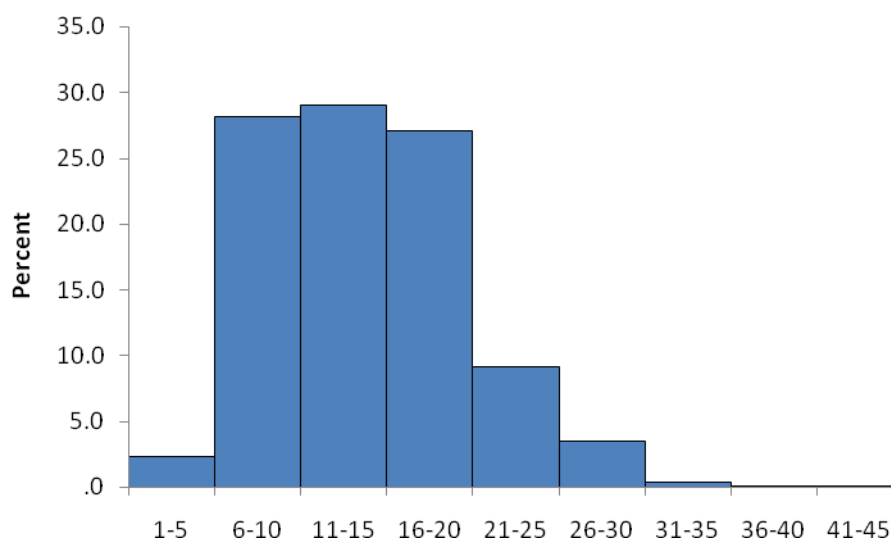


Figure 4 Percent of active-members estimated

The number of active members estimated varied by type of community⁴⁰. The median number of active members was 12 among rural brigade members, 15 among respondents from small towns, and 20 among respondents from suburban communities.

The number of non-active members reported ranged from 0 to 35, with a median of 4 (whether including or excluding estimates of 0). As shown in Figure 5, the majority of respondents providing an estimate of the number of non-active members (excluding 0, which accounted for only 2.5% of estimates) indicated that their brigade included between 1 and 5 non-active members. The number of non-active members did not vary across the different types of community.

⁴⁰ $\chi^2(2, N=756) = 132.47, p < .001$

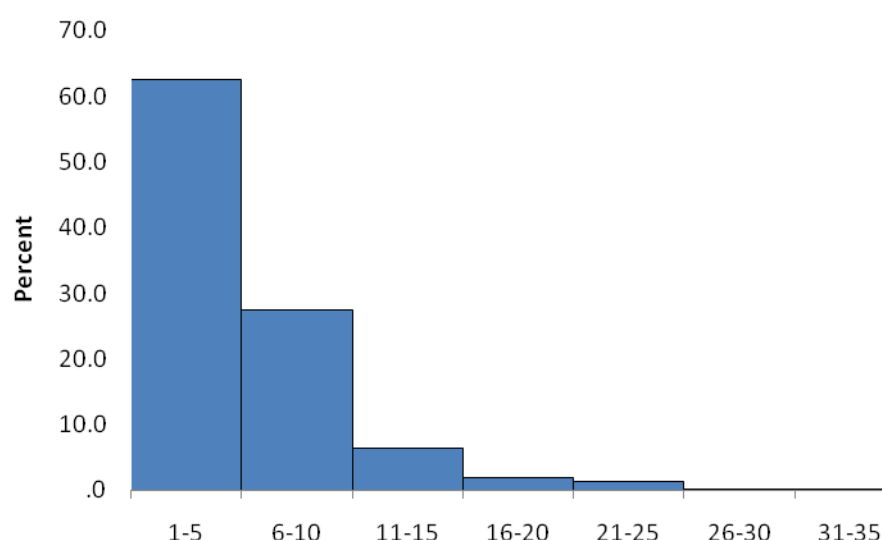


Figure 5 Percent of non-active members estimated

Among 550 respondents who provided estimates of both active and non-active members, the median percentage of non-active members was 25% of the brigade. In contrast, TFS records indicate that 13% of the volunteer membership hold the rank of member (and are presumably non-active), ranging from 2% in some brigades to 60% in others. In the majority of brigades (75%), however, less than 20% of the volunteers hold the rank of member.

The estimated proportion of non-active to active members varied according to community type. Among respondents from rural communities and small towns, the median estimate of non-active members was 25% of the brigade. In contrast, the median estimate among those from suburban communities was 20%.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether their brigade had a Junior or Cadet program, by ticking either “Yes” or “No”. Of the 818 (88.6%) respondents providing an answer to the question, “Is there a Junior or Cadet program?” 360 (39.0%) indicated that there was such a program. Although there was no evidence that those from rural communities and small towns were less likely to have a Junior or Cadet program, there was evidence that the greater the number of active members the more likely the brigade was to have a Juniors or Cadets program. However, the effect was small (for every additional active member, the brigade was 6% more likely to have a program). Other factors are also likely to predict whether a brigade has a Juniors or Cadets program. However, further research is needed to adequately explore this.

Brigade Activity

Respondents were asked, “How many fires/incidents does your brigade turn out to each year in total?” Four-hundred and eighty-nine (53%) respondents provided estimates ranging from 1 to 500, with a median of 25. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate how many structure fires, grass and scrub fires, MVAs, and other incidents their brigade attended each year. The number of responses, range, and median are presented in Table 23. Median values were unchanged when excluding responses that indicated no incidents were attended. Overall, respondents indicated that their brigade attended three times as many grass and scrub fires as MVAs or other incidents.

Table 23 Number and Type of Incidents Attended by Brigade

Incident	No of Responses	Range	Median
Grass & scrub fires	756 (81.9%)	1-250	15
MVAs	685 (74.2%)	0-200	5
Other incidents	460 (49.8%)	0-350	5
Structure fires	661 (71.6%)	0-100	3

As shown in Figure 6, most of the respondents estimated the total number of incidents attended by the brigade to be less than 30 per year. Of these, most indicated that fewer than 20 incidents were attended each year.

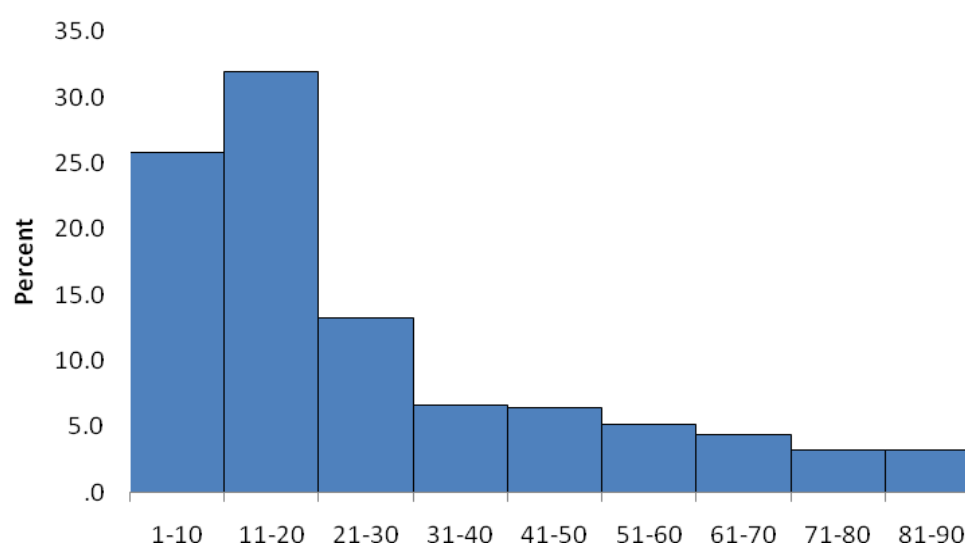


Figure 6 Percent of estimated number of incidents attended

From Figure 7 to Figure 10 the estimated number of each of the four types of incidents are presented. These figures show that most respondents (i.e., more than 75%) estimated that their brigade attended fewer than 10 structure fires, MVAs or other incidents each year. In contrast, the estimated number of grass and scrub fires attended was more variable. In addition to the 50% of respondents who indicated that fewer than 10 such incidents were attended, a further 30% estimated attending 11-20 grass or scrub fires each year.

The number of incidents attended varied with community type. Overall, respondents from urban communities estimated that their brigades attended more incidents than did those in small towns. In turn, those in small towns estimated that their brigades attended more incidents than did respondents in rural communities. The median number of (estimated) incidents attended by the local brigade is presented for each type of community in Table 24.

Table 24 Median number of incidents attended by community type

Incident	Community Type		
	Suburban	Small Town	Rural
Total incidents ⁴¹	100	50	16
Grass & scrub fires ⁴²	28	16	10
MVAs ⁴³	12	8	4
Structure fires ⁴⁴	8	6	2
Other incidents ⁴⁵	16	10	3

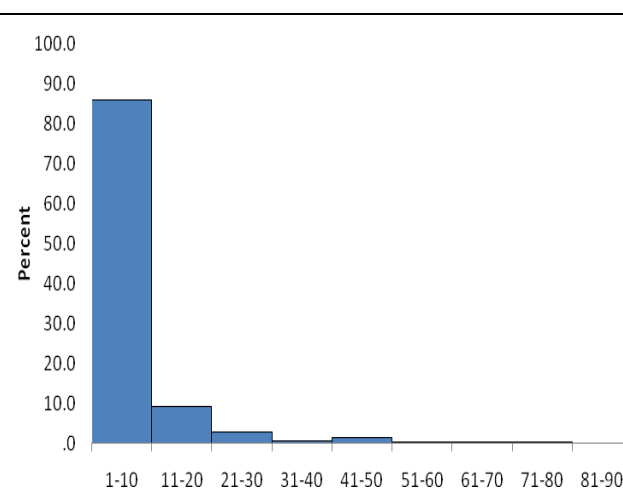


Figure 7 Percent of estimated number of structure fires attended

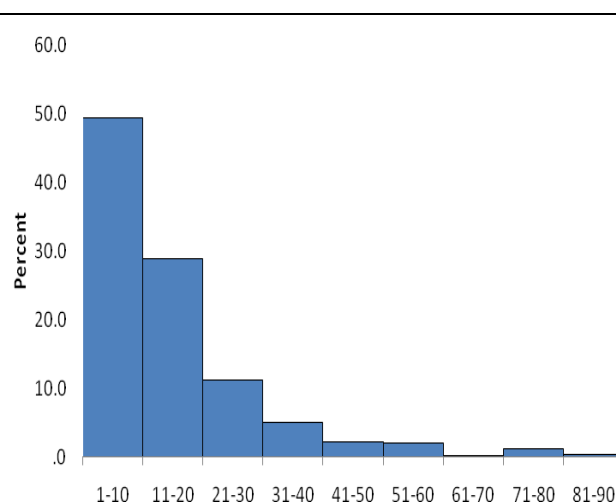


Figure 8 Percent of estimated number of grass fires attended

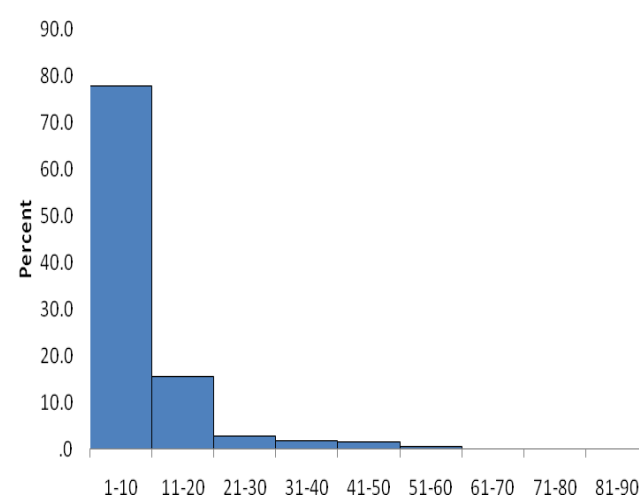


Figure 9 Percent of estimated number of MVAs attended

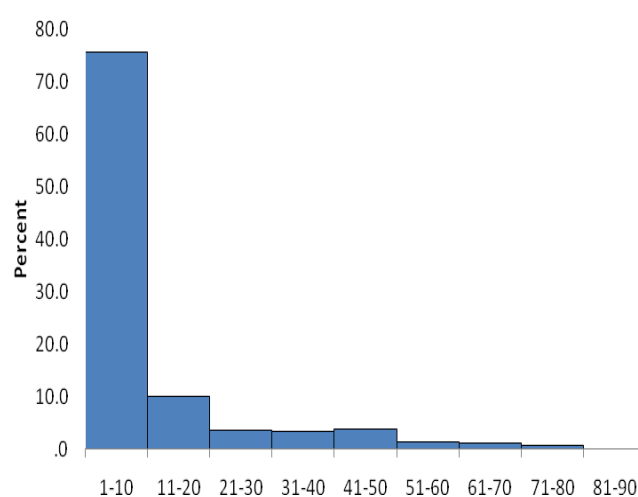


Figure 10 Percent of estimated number of other incidents attended

⁴¹ $\chi^2(2, N=460) = 143.94, p < .001$

⁴² $\chi^2(2, N=713) = 128.06, p < .001$

⁴³ $\chi^2(2, N=643) = 104.58, p < .001$

⁴⁴ $\chi^2(2, N=622) = 139.77, p < .001$

⁴⁵ $\chi^2(2, N=434) = 104.24, p < .001$

What is it like in your brigade?

Respondents were presented with a series of statements describing a variety of experiences with the local brigade, and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements. The distribution of responses to each of the items is presented in Table 25, descending in order of those statements rated strongly agree.

Table 25 What is it like in your brigade?

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
I have not been bullied in my brigade	3.6%	5.2%	1.1%	9.9%	80.2%	910
I have not been discriminated against in my brigade	3.8%	4.0%	1.3%	10.9%	79.9%	915
I have not been harassed in my brigade	3.2%	5.0%	1.4%	11.3%	79.1%	915
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities	1.2%	3.8%	1.5%	23.3%	70.2%	915
Elections are fair open and honest	3.7%	4.5%	7.9%	16.5%	67.4%	914
I feel safe when working with brigade members	1.5%	3.8%	1.4%	27.4%	65.9%	914
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well	1.0%	4.0%	3.7%	26.1%	65.2%	909
I'm given responsibilities that suit my skills and experience	2.6%	3.3%	2.4%	27.0%	64.7%	914
Brigade vehicles are always driven safely and responsibly	1.0%	6.0%	2.7%	26.8%	63.5%	915
My brigade gets along well with other brigades	0.5%	4.0%	3.8%	30.1%	61.5%	914
I am included in the group by all members of my brigade	2.4%	6.4%	1.2%	29.3%	60.7%	911
Brigade officers treat members with respect	2.1%	6.8%	1.4%	30.5%	59.2%	917
I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities	1.5%	3.9%	3.8%	34.8%	56.0%	915
There are no problems with factions in my brigade	5.1%	7.7%	6.3%	26.5%	54.4%	906
My brigade lets me know what's going on	3.3%	6.8%	0.8%	36.0%	53.2%	915
Conflict between members is rare	3.1%	8.7%	4.1%	31.1%	53.1%	911
All members can take part in decision making	3.6%	9.9%	4.6%	29.9%	52.0%	916
My brigade gets along well with other agencies like Parks and SES	2.0%	4.1%	11.8%	33.6%	48.5%	913
The brigade is well disciplined	2.6%	8.4%	3.1%	48.4%	36.5%	909
Brigade training sessions are well organised	6.3%	15.3%	3.9%	42.0%	32.6%	909
Brigade members attend training regularly	5.3%	15.0%	2.0%	46.1%	31.7%	909
The training program is well planned	7.1%	15.9%	4.5%	41.4%	31.0%	910
There is an organised social program	10.2%	17.5%	4.4%	38.6%	29.2%	906

Overall, the data suggest that most respondents felt their experiences in the brigade had been positive. However, our interest is in better understanding the negative experiences of volunteering which might undermine intentions to continue volunteering. In the following discussion we therefore draw attention not only to the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing, but also disagreeing with the statements about brigade life. To aid interpretation of the table, the discussion is sorted according to several themes.

Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment

As shown in the table above, 80% of respondents strongly agreed that they had not experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment in their brigade. Nevertheless, close to 10% of respondents indicated that they *had* been the target of bullying discrimination or harassment in their brigade.

Brigade Safety

Approximately two thirds of respondents strongly agreed that they (a) felt safe when working with brigade members, (b) were given responsibilities suited to their skills and experience, and (c) believed brigade vehicles were always driven safely and responsibly. On the other hand, around 5% disagreed with these sorts of statements.

People management: Interpersonal and Intergroup Interactions

Ratings of brigade member interactions with each other and brigade officers were predominantly positive, though relatively less favourable than ratings related to perceived safety. For example, approximately 60% of respondents strongly agreed that they were included by all members of the brigade and that officers treated other members with respect, while around 50% strongly agreed that the brigade let them know what was going on, that all members took part in decision-making and that problems with factions and conflict between members were rare. Looking at these items in terms of the number of respondents disagreeing suggests some problems with factions in brigades (14%), conflict between members (12%), taking part in decision-making (14%) and being kept informed (10%).

Planning and Organisation

The least favourably rated aspects of brigade life relate to brigade discipline and organisation. Less than one third of respondents strongly agreed that members regularly attended training, or that the training program was well-planned. Indeed, more than 20% of respondents disagreed that training was well-planned or organised, and that members regularly attended. It may be that dissatisfaction with the organisation and planning of training sessions translates into reluctance to regularly attend training. It is also worth noting that almost 30% of respondents disagreed that there was an organised social program in their brigade. At first blush, this might not seem a particularly important part of brigade life. However, the perception that the brigade offered an organised social program was moderately correlated with ratings of overall satisfaction ($r = .26, p < .001$) and perceptions of leadership quality ($r = .38, p < .001$). Not surprisingly, these correlations were stronger among non-leaders than leaders. Providing more leadership training targeted at improving the planning and organisation of training sessions may be one strategy worth pursuing in an effort to improve not only (a) attendance at training and meetings, but also (b) perceptions of the brigade leadership quality, and (c) the desirability of becoming a brigade leader.

Overall, the table suggests that the experiences TFS volunteers have in their brigades are fairly positive, but that improvements could be made particularly in the areas of (a) organisation and planning of training sessions and social programs, (b) guarding against problems with interpersonal conflicts and intergroup factions, and (c) encouraging more effective communication and inclusive decision-making processes.

Ratings of Current Leaders versus Others

The responses of those currently occupying a leadership position⁴⁶ were compared with those of all others. Those in leadership positions gave more positive ratings than did those not occupying leadership positions, on the following 17 (of the 23) items about brigade life: I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities; I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience; The brigade lets me know what's going on; My brigade gets along well with other brigades; I am included in the group by all members of my brigade; Elections are fair, open and honest; All members take part in decision making; I feel safe when working with brigade members; New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities; Brigade training sessions are well planned; Brigade training sessions are well organised; Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well; Conflict between members is rare; Brigade members and officers treat each other with respect; My brigade gets along well with other agencies like Parks & SES; The brigade is well disciplined. The relevant statistics are presented in Table 70, of Appendix B. Overall, differences

⁴⁶ Respondents indicating that they currently held any of the following positions were included as leaders: Group Officer; Brigade Chief; 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Officer, Training Instructor, Safety Officer, Communications Officer, Secretary, Treasurer, Permit Officer, Association Representative and Equipment Maintenance Officer. T tests were used for these comparisons because these are considered robust to violations of the normality assumption when sample sizes are equal and homogeneity of variance is maintained. Where homogeneity of variance assumptions were violated the adjusted t statistics are reported.

between leaders and non-leaders were small to medium (differences of .20 to .40 on a 5-point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree), and mean scores were quite high (close to 4 on the 5-point scale).

In order to more clearly pin-point the particular areas where leadership satisfaction is lowest, and may warrant the greatest efforts toward improvement, Table 26 was produced. This table shows the percentage of leaders and non-leaders who disagreed with each of the “what is it like in your brigade?” items, on which leaders and non-leaders differed. This table shows that quite a substantial proportion of ordinary rank and file volunteers disagree that training sessions are well planned and organised. Moreover, the divergence between leaders and non-leaders is greatest on items concerning the planning of training. Thus, this is one area in which it may be particularly useful to focus leadership training.

Table 26 What is it like in your brigade? By Leadership

Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree that:	Leaders	Non-Leaders	Difference
Brigade training sessions are well planned	18.8%	27.7%	8.9
Brigade training sessions are well organised	17.9%	25.4%	7.5
All the members take part in decision making	9.9%	17.4%	7.5
The brigade lets me know what’s going on	6.4%	14.0%	7.6
Conflict between members is rare	10.0%	13.6%	3.6
The brigade is well-disciplined	9.4%	12.7%	3.3
I am included in the group by all members of my brigade	5.6%	12.2%	6.6
Brigade Officers and members treat each other with respect	7.4%	10.4%	3.0
Elections are fair, open and honest	6.1%	10.4%	4.3
I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities	1.9%	9.3%	7.4
I’m given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience	3.4%	8.6%	5.2
I feel safe when working with brigade members	3.8%	7.0%	3.2
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well	3.6%	6.4%	2.8
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities	3.8%	6.3%	2.5
My brigade gets along well with other brigades	3.2%	6.1%	2.9

In addition to the divergence in ratings of brigade training, notable differences also emerged on ratings of participation in decision making, the brigade letting members know “what’s going on”, opportunities to meet other brigades, and feeling included by all members of the brigade. In all cases a greater percentage of non-leaders than leaders disagreed with these statements. It may be useful for leadership training to include some components equipping leaders with strategies to enhance non-leader opportunities to engage in decision making, and feel sufficiently informed as decisions are made.

High-ranking leaders versus others

The responses of those occupying high-ranking positions (i.e., 1st Officers and above) were compared with those of all other respondents, and several significant differences emerged. Consistent with the comparisons between those occupying any leadership position with those not occupying such positions, those in high ranking positions agreed even more strongly than others with most statements. Indeed, the differences emerged on the same items as comparisons between leaders versus non-leaders. The relevant items, and associated statistics⁴⁷, are presented in Table 71, Appendix B.

Additionally, there was some evidence that high-ranking leaders perceived relations within the brigade to be more harmonious than did other respondents.

⁴⁷ Mann-Whitney U tests are used for comparisons between high-ranking leaders versus others because in addition to non-normally distributed data, cell sizes were unequal, and variances were heterogenous.

Gender differences

Men and women reported similar experiences of brigade life on most items. In fact, the only gender differences to emerge were on ratings of particularly negative aspects of brigade life; discrimination, bullying and harassment. Because these items were strongly correlated⁴⁸ an average score was computed. Consistent with previous research (e.g., McLennan & Birch, 2007), men agreed more strongly than women that they had not experienced these sorts of behaviours⁴⁹. Table 27 shows a detailed breakdown of the distribution of responses for men and women.

Table 27 Bullying, Discrimination & Harassment by Gender – detailed breakdown

Item	Gender	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I have not been bullied in my brigade	Men	3.5%	4.4%	0.9%	9.8%	81.4%	747
	Women	4.5%	8.3%	1.9%	10.2%	75.2%	157
I have not been discriminated against in my brigade	Men	2.9%	3.7%	1.2%	10.3%	81.9%	751
	Women	8.2%	5.7%	1.9%	13.9%	70.3%	158
I have not been harassed in my brigade	Men	2.8%	4.7%	1.5%	10.5%	80.6%	752
	Women	5.1%	6.4%	1.3%	15.3%	72.0%	157

In Table 28 the percentage of respondents selecting “strongly disagree” and “somewhat disagree” are summed to show the percentage of respondents indicating that they *had* experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment in their brigade. This data suggests that women are twice as likely as men to have had these negative experiences in the course of their volunteering with TFS.

Table 28 Bullying, Discrimination, & Harassment by Gender

	Men	Women
I have been bullied in my brigade	7.9%	12.8%
I have been discriminated against in my brigade	6.6%	13.9%
I have been harassed in my brigade	7.5%	11.5%

Community Type

Cross-tabulation revealed that responses to several of the items measuring perceptions of brigade life varied with the type of community from which respondents were drawn. The items on which significant differences emerged are presented in Table 29.

⁴⁸ $r_s = .76$ to $.87$

⁴⁹ $U = 52352, p = .006$

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Table 29 Experiences in my brigade by Community Type

Item	Community	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I have not been bullied in my brigade ⁵⁰	Suburban	7.8%	7.8%	2.6%	13.1%	68.6%	154
	Small Town	2.1%	5.9%	1.6%	10.2%	80.2%	188
	Rurual	2.8%	4.2%	0.4%	7.6%	85.1%	510
I have not been discriminated against in my brigade ⁵¹	Suburban	9.1%	4.5%	0.6%	13.0%	72.7%	154
	Small Town	1.6%	4.3%	3.2%	13.4%	77.5%	188
	Rurual	3.2%	4.2%	0.8%	8.1%	83.8%	510
I have not been harassed in my brigade ⁵²	Suburban	5.8%	8.4%	1.9%	14.9%	68.8%	154
	Small Town	2.7%	4.8%	1.6%	14.9%	76.1%	188
	Rurual	2.8%	4.2%	1.4%	7.4%	84.3%	503
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well ⁵³	Suburban	3.3%	4.6%	4.6%	32.0%	55.6%	154
	Small Town	0.0%	3.2%	0.5%	29.0%	67.2%	188
	Rurual	0.6%	4.2%	4.6%	23.4%	67.3%	501
All the members can take part in decision making ⁵⁴	Suburban	7.2%	12.4%	3.2%	38.6%	37.9%	154
	Small Town	3.7%	11.2%	5.3%	28.7%	51.1%	188
	Rurual	2.8%	8.3%	4.2%	28.1%	56.6%	505
Conflict between members is rare ⁵⁵	Suburban	5.8%	9.7%	3.2%	44.2%	37.0%	154
	Small Town	3.2%	7.0%	4.3%	40.1%	45.5%	188
	Rurual	2.0%	8.5%	4.0%	23.7%	61.8%	503
I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience ⁵⁶	Suburban	6.5%	5.8%	2.6%	26.0%	59.1%	154
	Small Town	2.1%	2.7%	4.3%	28.2%	62.8%	188
	Rurual	0.0%	5.9%	4.4%	27.9%	61.8%	510
There are no problems with factions in my brigade ⁵⁷	Suburban	7.9%	12.6%	7.3%	30.5%	41.7%	154
	Small Town	4.3%	5.4%	8.1%	33.3%	48.9%	188
	Rurual	4.8%	7.0%	5.4%	23.0%	59.8%	500
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities ⁵⁸	Suburban	2.6%	5.9%	0.0%	32.0%	59.5%	153
	Small Town	1.6%	4.3%	0.5%	25.5%	68.1%	188
	Rurual	0.8%	3.0%	1.8%	19.6%	74.8%	504
My brigade gets along well with other brigades ⁵⁹	Suburban	1.3%	4.6%	3.3%	39.9%	51.0%	153
	Small Town	0.5%	2.1%	3.2%	36.4%	57.8%	187
	Rurual	0.4%	4.0%	4.4%	24.6%	66.7%	504

As shown in Table 29, respondents from rural communities tended to rate their experiences more positively than those from small towns, who in turn rated their experiences more positively than those from suburban brigades. Those from suburban communities were two to three times more likely than those in rural communities to indicate that they had experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment in their brigade. The results also indicate that conflict between members, problems with factions, and less welcoming responses to new members, occur more so in suburban than rural communities and small towns. Problems with factions and fewer opportunities for all members to take part in decision making processes appear to be particular areas of concern for suburban brigades. Indeed, close to 20% of respondents from suburban areas

⁵⁰ $\chi^2(8, N=842) = 27.09, p = .001$

⁵¹ $\chi^2(8, N=846) = 27.84, p = .001$

⁵² $\chi^2(8, N=845) = 23.24, p = .003$

⁵³ $\chi^2(8, N=840) = 24.65, p = .002$

⁵⁴ $\chi^2(8, N=846) = 21.52, p = .006$

⁵⁵ $\chi^2(8, N=844) = 45.89, p < .001$

⁵⁶ $\chi^2(8, N=846) = 20.34, p = .009$

⁵⁷ $\chi^2(8, N=837) = 25.36, p = .001$

⁵⁸ $\chi^2(8, N=845) = 22.38, p = .004$

⁵⁹ $\chi^2(8, N=844) = 21.69, p = .006$

disagreed that all members could take part in decision making, and that there were no problems with factions.

Further analyses were conducted to explore the rural-urban divide. Differences between rural communities and others on ratings of harassment, discrimination, bullying, problems with factions, and conflict between members disappeared when controlling for the estimated number of incidents attended by the brigade. This perhaps suggests that the higher demands on suburban brigades take a toll on management of brigade climate.

What is leadership like in your brigade?

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements concerning the leadership practices in their brigade. Between 893 (96.7%) and 923 (98.6%) did so. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 30 with items sorted ascending in order from those least to most strongly agree.

Table 30 What is leadership like in your brigade?

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
A new brigade chief is elected after two or three terms	11.6%	11.8%	22.3%	21.2%	33.1%	893
The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot solve it themselves	4.8%	5.1%	22.6%	25.7%	41.8%	902
Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief	5.6%	6.0%	27.4%	18.6%	42.4%	898
The brigade officers are good communicators	3.8%	8.7%	1.8%	39.8%	45.9%	910
The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member	3.3%	8.1%	12.2%	29.4%	46.9%	908
The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for	2.8%	5.6%	5.9%	36.2%	49.4%	908
If a member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers to do so privately if practical	3.1%	5.4%	15.4%	26.3%	49.8%	905
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising	2.8%	6.6%	6.4%	31.9%	52.3%	906
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members	4.6%	6.3%	3.1%	31.0%	55.0%	907
The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed	1.9%	5.0%	3.4%	32.4%	57.3%	914
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another	6.2%	5.3%	4.3%	26.0%	58.2%	910
The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable	1.8%	4.9%	1.9%	32.2%	59.2%	910
The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained	1.4%	5.1%	1.9%	31.8%	59.8%	909
The brigade officers are fair minded	2.5%	4.5%	1.6%	30.3%	61.0%	910
The brigade chief keeps in contract with district staff	1.0%	2.1%	10.0%	23.6%	63.3%	910
The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed	0.8%	4.2%	1.8%	29.1%	64.2%	908
The brigade is not a "one-man-band"	3.5%	5.9%	2.5%	23.4%	64.7%	911

Overall, leadership was evaluated positively, with over two thirds of respondents indicating that they either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the positive statements. Nevertheless, some aspects of brigade leadership were evaluated more positively than others. For example, items relating to the skills and knowledge of brigade officers, and their efforts to maintain safe working practices, were endorsed more strongly than those relating to interpersonal communication and dealing with troublesome members.

Responses to the item concerning the election of a new brigade chief after two or three terms varied much more widely than any other item, with almost half of the respondents indicating that they either disagreed or were unsure if a new chief was regularly elected. It is worth noting that ratings on this item significantly predicted the overall evaluation of brigade leadership. Greater agreement with the statement that "a new

brigade chief is elected after two or three terms” was associated with greater agreement that “Leadership in my brigade is very good”⁶⁰. Since satisfaction with leadership is associated with intentions to remain, it may be worth considering some implementation of practices that will encourage the election of a new chief more regularly than appears to be the case at present. It may also be worthwhile gauging volunteers’ views on adopting shorter standard terms of office, for example moving from the TFS model of 5-year terms to one of 2-year terms (as is the case in some other fire agencies, e.g., CFA).

Leaders versus Non Leaders

Principal Axis Factor Analysis suggested all items loaded on a single factor. Thus, an average score was computed for these items (Cronbach alpha = .94). A comparison of those currently occupying leadership positions with those not occupying such positions revealed that leaders ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .67$) rated the leadership more favourably than did others ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .81$)⁶¹. A comparison of ratings made by those currently occupying the higher-ranking leadership positions (1st Officer or above) with all other respondents also indicated that these leaders evaluated the quality of brigade leadership more positively than did the other respondents⁶².

Independent tests were also conducted separately for each of the items. The differences between all those currently occupying leadership positions with others are presented in Table 72 (see Appendix B for the relevant statistics). The only item on which current leaders did not differ from others concerned the re-election of brigade chiefs after two to three terms. In all other cases respondents currently occupying leadership positions rated the quality of leadership in their brigade more favourably than did the remaining respondents. The largest differences emerged on items concerning interpersonal interaction (e.g., The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising) and dealing with interpersonal difficulties (e.g., The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member).

In an effort to identify the areas in which regular (non-leader) volunteers are least satisfied with brigade leadership, the percentage of respondents disagreeing with each of the statements about brigade leadership was calculated. As shown in Table 31, over one in four non-leader volunteers disagreed that a new chief was elected after two or three terms. Similarly, one in five leaders disagreed that a new chief was regularly elected. Given evidence that disagreement with this statement was associated with lower levels of satisfaction and perceived quality of leadership, it may be advantageous for leadership development programs to encourage Brigade Chiefs to relinquish their position after one or two terms, and also to communicate to the brigade the importance of succession planning. The other items that non-leader members tended to disagree with more than others concerned brigade officer communication skills, dealing with troublesome members, and showing favouritism. Relatively fewer members disagreed that leaders were meeting the procedural and operational facets of their duties. These data suggest that it would be particularly useful to include components aimed at enhancing communication skills, treating others fairly, and being seen to deal with troublesome members quickly, in leadership development programs.

⁶⁰ $\beta = .312$, $t(871) = 9.68$, $p < .001$

⁶¹ $t(791) = 5.01$, $p < .001$

⁶² $U = 36820$, $p = .001$

Table 31 What is leadership like? By Leadership Position

Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree	Leaders	Non-leaders	Difference
A new brigade chief is elected after two or three terms	20.5%	26.2%	5.7%
The brigade officers are good communicators	8.9%	16.4%	7.5%
The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member	8.1%	15.0%	6.9%
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another	8.9%	14.1%	5.2%
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticizing	5.8%	13.2%	7.4%
Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief	10.8%	12.4%	1.6%
The brigade is not a 'one man band'	7.2%	11.8%	4.6%
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members	10.2%	11.6%	1.4%
If a brigade member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical	6.0%	11.1%	5.1%
The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot resolve it themselves	9.0%	10.8%	1.8%
The brigade officers are fair-minded	3.8%	10.4%	6.6%
The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for	7.2%	9.6%	2.4%
The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed	5.1%	8.8%	3.7%
The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained	4.3%	8.8%	4.5%
The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable	5.3%	8.2%	2.9%
The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed	4.5%	5.5%	1.0%
The brigade chief keeps in contact with District staff	2.6%	3.6%	1.0%

High-ranking leaders versus Others

Comparisons between those occupying high-ranking leadership positions with all other respondents were also conducted. Again, high-ranking leaders gave more favourable responses than did others, and although the differences were significant on fewer items (see Table 73, Appendix B), this is probably only due to differences in the statistical tests used (non-parametric comparisons were made for high-ranking leaders due to unequal samples sizes and violations of homogeneity of variance, whereas parametric tests were made for comparisons of all current leaders versus others).

Community Type

Cross-tabulation revealed that perceptions of brigade leadership varied with the type of community from which respondents were drawn. The items on which significant differences emerged are presented in Table 32.

Table 32 What is leadership like? By Community Type

Item	Community	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Brigade officers are fair-minded ⁶³	Suburban	5.3%	6.6%	0.7%	36.8%	50.7%	154
	Small Town	1.1%	5.9%	1.6%	35.8%	55.6%	187
	Rurual	1.8%	3.0%	1.4%	27.1%	66.7%	505
The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member ⁶⁴	Suburban	6.5%	9.2%	9.8%	37.3%	37.3%	153
	Small Town	1.6%	9.1%	8.6%	31.2%	49.5%	186
	Rurual	2.6%	6.6%	14.3%	26.7%	49.8%	502
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising ⁶⁵	Suburban	6.5%	9.8%	3.3%	34.0%	46.4%	153
	Small Town	1.1%	7.5%	5.4%	34.9%	51.1%	186
	Rurual	1.6%	4.6%	7.8%	30.3%	55.7%	510
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members ⁶⁶	Suburban	11.0%	6.5%	1.3%	33.8%	47.4%	154
	Small Town	2.2%	7.0%	3.8%	32.4%	54.6%	185
	Rurual	3.4%	6.4%	3.0%	29.8%	57.4%	500
If a member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical ⁶⁷	Suburban	8.5%	9.2%	8.5%	24.8%	49.0%	153
	Small Town	1.6%	4.3%	11.8%	31.7%	50.5%	186
	Rurual	1.6%	5.2%	17.8%	25.3%	50.1%	499
The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained ⁶⁸	Suburban	4.6%	5.9%	3.3%	36.8%	49.3%	152
	Small Town	0.5%	6.4%	0.5%	34.8%	57.8%	187
	Rurual	0.8%	4.0%	1.4%	30.1%	63.7%	502
Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief ⁶⁹	Suburban	8.7%	9.4%	33.6%	13.4%	34.9%	149
	Small Town	5.5%	7.1%	22.5%	24.2%	40.7%	182
	Rurual	4.6%	4.2%	28.1%	17.6%	45.5%	499
The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for ⁷⁰	Suburban	7.8%	9.1%	3.9%	42.9%	36.4%	154
	Small Town	1.1%	5.9%	3.8%	38.7%	50.5%	186
	Rurual	2.0%	3.4%	7.0%	34.7%	53.0%	502
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another ⁷¹	Suburban	12.5%	8.6%	4.6%	25.7%	48.7%	154
	Small Town	6.5%	3.2%	2.7%	31.7%	55.9%	186
	Rurual	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	24.6%	61.9%	504

As shown in Table 32 perceptions of brigade leadership varied with community type. Respondents from rural communities rated leadership more positively than did respondents from small towns, who in turn rated leadership more positively than respondents in suburban communities. It is worth noting that respondents from suburban communities were approximately two to five times more likely than others to strongly disagree with positive statements about brigade leadership. One area of leadership in which respondents from suburban brigades may be particularly dissatisfied concerns favouritism on the part of brigade chiefs. Whereas fewer than 10% of respondents from rural communities and small towns indicated that their brigade chief showed favouritism to certain individuals or groups, more than 20% of suburban respondents did so. Similarly, a higher percentage of respondents from suburban communities indicated that their brigade officers could improve their performance, with approximately 15% of these respondents (versus about 5% in other communities) indicating that their brigade officers do not (a) deal promptly with trouble

⁶³ $\chi^2(8, N=844)=25.22, p=.001$

⁶⁴ $\chi^2(8, N=841)=22.63, p=.004$

⁶⁵ $\chi^2(8, N=838)=26.85, p=.001$

⁶⁶ $\chi^2(8, N=839)=22.96, p=.003$

⁶⁷ $\chi^2(8, N=838)=35.48, p<.001$

⁶⁸ $\chi^2(8, N=841)=25.87, p=.001$

⁶⁹ $\chi^2(8, N=830)=21.90, p=.005$

⁷⁰ $\chi^2(8, N=842)=37.14, p<.001$

⁷¹ $\chi^2(8, N=842)=21.10, p=.001$

caused by other members, (b) give helpful feedback rather than blame or criticise, or (c) correct members in private if practical.

Consistent with the analyses on ratings of brigade life, several differences between rural and other brigades disappeared when the estimated number of incidents attended was controlled (e.g., ratings of fair-mindedness, favouritism on the part of the chief, and the chief ensuring that members do what they are responsible for). This suggests that brigade chiefs in suburban communities may be in greater need of leadership and coping support from TFS.

How important are these brigade leadership skills?

Respondents were presented with a series of brigade leadership skills⁷², and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed each of these skills was important. Overall, very few respondents indicated that any of the leadership skills were not applicable (2.4% - 6.4%), or failed to respond altogether (1.1% - 2.1%). The level of endorsement for each proposed skill is presented in Table 33 below, excluding non-responses and not applicable responses⁷³.

Table 33 How important are these brigade leadership skills?

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
Promoting teamwork among brigade members	1.6%	2.3%	0.9%	16.4%	78.8%	884
Helping new members mix in with the brigade	1.4%	2.4%	1.0%	17.8%	77.4%	886
Delegating tasks appropriately	1.1%	2.4%	1.4%	18.4%	76.8%	888
Making sure members are kept informed about brigade issues	2.3%	2.5%	0.6%	18.7%	76.0%	883
Promoting the brigades needs at Group, District and Region	1.7%	2.3%	4.9%	20.8%	70.3%	878
Developing members so they can move into leadership roles	1.9%	4.7%	2.8%	21.8%	68.8%	887
Mentoring members	2.4%	2.5%	3.7%	23.1%	68.3%	874
Resolving conflicts and disputes among brigade members	1.6%	3.2%	3.6%	24.2%	67.3%	863
Involving members in brigade decision making	2.1%	3.7%	1.6%	25.7%	66.9%	890
Disciplining members fairly	2.1%	3.7%	5.8%	23.6%	64.8%	860
Managing member discontent and factionalism	2.4%	2.6%	7.9%	25.8%	61.3%	845
Holding members accountable for tasks they are responsible for	1.7%	3.1%	2.4%	34.9%	57.9%	872

As shown in the table above, the promotion of teamwork, helping new members integrate with the brigade, appropriate delegation of tasks, and keeping members informed about brigade issues, were rated important by over three quarters of respondents. It is perhaps interesting to note that items concerning the management of negative events were not as strongly endorsed as other tasks. Holding members accountable, managing discontent, disciplining members, and resolving conflicts were among the five least endorsed items, though approximately two thirds of respondents still strongly agreed that these were important skills. It is perhaps not surprising that the importance of conflict resolution skills were rated relatively less important than other skills given that conflict resolution can be a particularly difficult and politically risky business for those in leadership positions, or aspiring to fulfil leadership positions.

Factor analysis revealed that the leadership skills items loaded on a single factor. Thus, a composite score was computed, and several analyses conducted comparing the ratings of respondents belonging to different groups, such as those in various leadership positions versus those not in these positions, and men versus women. No significant differences emerged.

Separate tests on each of the items yielded only one difference between those currently holding leadership positions and those not holding such positions. Those currently occupying leadership ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .87$) positions tended to agree more strongly than others ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .94$) that developing members into leadership roles was important⁷⁴. This likely reflects a greater awareness among leaders than non-leaders of the potential difficulties in finding satisfactory replacements when they no longer wish to continue in their leadership position.

⁷² Many of these skills have been identified as important to effective leadership in previous research with notable Australian leaders (see Henry, 2005)

⁷³ The values presented in this table do not change by more than 5% points when "not applicable" responses are included in the total count.

⁷⁴ $t(885) = 2.69$, $p = .007$

Additionally, Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to compare the responses of those in high-ranking leadership positions (1st Officer or higher) with all others. High-ranking leaders agreed more strongly than others that the following skills were important: promoting brigade interests⁷⁵, developing members for leadership positions⁷⁶, and keeping members informed⁷⁷.

Overall, then, leaders and subordinates do not appear to substantially differ in the value they attach to each of the leadership skills listed.

Comparisons between respondents from different types of communities did not indicate any differences in the perceived importance of each of the leadership skills listed. There was also very little evidence that the importance attributed to each of the above mentioned skills varied according to age or gender.

⁷⁵ U = 44963, $p = .005$

⁷⁶ U = 45287, $p = .001$

⁷⁷ U = 46363, $p = .006$

How important are these brigade leader behaviours?

Respondents were presented with a series of leader behaviours and characteristics, and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed each of these was important. The distribution of responses are presented in Table 34.

Table 34 How important are these brigade leader behaviours?

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
Honest and trustworthy	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%	12.5%	85.2%	913
Fair and not taking sides	1.3%	1.4%	0.7%	16.2%	80.4%	908
Set a good example	1.2%	2.0%	0.3%	16.1%	80.4%	912
Show good judgement	1.3%	1.5%	1.0%	16.8%	79.4%	907
Follow through on what they say they will do	1.4%	2.2%	1.4%	18.3%	76.6%	912
Keep up to date in skills and knowledge	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	21.1%	75.1%	913
Listen to people's concerns	1.2%	2.6%	1.1%	21.2%	73.9%	916
Keep a sense of humour	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%	23.9%	72.0%	914
Balance members' family, work and brigade demands	1.4%	1.5%	2.1%	23.1%	71.8%	909
Delegate tasks to other members	1.3%	2.3%	0.9%	27.4%	68.1%	913
Keep an open mind about new ideas and other points of view	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	27.6%	67.2%	911
Understand people's feelings	1.3%	3.3%	1.5%	26.8%	67.1%	912
Promote the interests of the brigade to TFS and outside organisations (e.g. local council)	1.7%	3.2%	4.6%	30.5%	60.1%	909
Develop a vision for the brigade and support members to achieve that vision	1.2%	4.2%	5.7%	35.5%	53.4%	909

As shown in the table, the majority (>85%) of respondents agreed that all leader behaviours were important. However, some behaviours appear to be more important to respondents than others. For example, those attributes concerned with maintaining good leader-member relationships were endorsed more strongly than behaviours aimed at furthering brigade interests in the wider organisation or community.

Overall, there was little evidence to suggest that those in leadership positions generally or those in high-ranking leadership positions agreed any more than others that these behaviours were important. Indeed, the only significant differences concerned understanding people's feelings. Both leaders⁷⁸ and high ranking leaders⁷⁹ agreed more strongly than others that it is important to understand people's feelings.

Comparisons between respondents from different types of communities did not indicate any differences in the perceived importance of each of the leadership behaviours listed. Likewise, there was no indication of any systematic age or gender differences.

⁷⁸ (Leaders $M = 4.62$, $SD = .76$; Others $M = 4.47$, $SD = .82$), $t(910) = 2.86$, $p = .004$

⁷⁹ $U = 47170$, $p < .001$

What are good ways for members to become good brigade leaders?

Respondents were presented with a list of several different approaches to leadership development training, and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed each of these approaches would be useful. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 35.

Table 35 What are good ways for members to become good brigade leaders?

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
Mentoring by more experienced members	0.7%	1.2%	1.5%	25.6%	71.0%	909
On-the-job learning as you move through the ranks	0.3%	1.5%	1.4%	26.9%	69.8%	906
Training courses run by experts in leadership and management	1.0%	3.1%	3.3%	28.8%	63.8%	910
Training courses run by the brigade	2.6%	4.3%	3.1%	36.5%	53.5%	910
Residential training courses away from the brigade	3.3%	8.7%	11.3%	38.5%	38.2%	905
Good leaders are born not made.	20.0%	26.8%	5.8%	28.9%	18.5%	910

As shown in Table 35, the types of leadership development perceived to be most useful were mentoring by more experienced members, and on-the-job learning. Indeed, approximately 70% of respondents strongly agreed that these approaches to leader development were useful. Training courses run by the brigade and residential training courses run away from the brigade were rated less positively, though the majority of respondents still agreed or strongly agreed that these methods were useful. It is worth noting that although more than 90% of respondents agreed that mentoring, on-the-job learning, and training courses run by experts or the brigade were useful, relatively fewer (77%) agreed that residential training would be useful. Presumably, the costs associated with this mode of delivery are sufficiently prohibitive to discourage quite a large portion of respondents considering such training accessible and/or affordable, and therefore, useful. Finally, it is interesting that although the majority of respondents considered all modes training useful, almost half also agreed that good leaders are born rather than made. The views of those in leadership positions generally, and in high ranking leadership positions specifically, were no different from those not in such positions. Also, the views of respondents from rural versus small town versus suburban communities did not differ. Likewise, no substantive age or gender differences were observed.

How important are training courses in each of these leadership skills?

A list of several different leadership skills was presented, and participants were asked to indicate how important or unimportant they felt training courses in each of these skills would be. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 36, descending in the order of leadership training rated very important.

Table 36 How important are training courses in these leadership skills?

Item	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Don't Know	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total Valid
People Management skills	1.2%	2.1%	1.7%	24.6%	70.5%	904
Effective face-to-face communication	1.1%	2.9%	1.8%	26.5%	67.7%	904
Managing brigades	1.0%	1.7%	2.2%	28.2%	67.0%	905
Inducting and mentoring new brigade members	0.6%	3.0%	1.8%	29.3%	65.4%	901
Developing teams	0.6%	2.2%	2.9%	29.1%	65.2%	906
Resolving conflicts and disputes	1.4%	3.3%	2.9%	29.1%	63.2%	906
Ensuring Workplace Fairness	1.2%	3.1%	3.0%	29.8%	62.9%	904
Supervising work groups	0.7%	3.0%	3.2%	35.9%	57.2%	895
Running meetings	1.1%	7.5%	3.0%	45.1%	43.3%	906
Effective written communication	1.3%	7.4%	5.1%	43.1%	43.1%	901

As shown in the table above, all training courses were considered important. However, some courses were considered more important than others. Training courses in people management skills and effective face-to-face communication, for example, were rated very important by more than two thirds of the respondents, while training in skills for running meetings and encouraging effective written communication were considered very important by less than half the respondents.

The ratings made by those in leadership positions generally and those in high-ranking positions specifically were compared with all other respondents. No significant differences emerged. No differences emerged on ratings from those in different types of community, or different age groups. Nor were there any substantive differences in ratings made by male compared with female respondents.

Respondents were also asked to “suggest any other training courses in leadership skills that might be important.” A total of 91 respondents made comments in the space provided to suggest other training courses. Of these comments, 26 related to leadership training in “people skills”, 14 to working in high-pressure situations, and 9 to Workplace Training/Instructor skills. Eight respondents made other suggestions, including time management skills, IT skills, safety skills, mentoring, succession planning, and the development of strategies, expectations and standards. The remaining comments did not suggest training courses, but rather expressed (a) an evaluation of current training arrangements or (b) preferences for various types of training delivery. Examples of the different types of comments are presented in Table 37.

Table 37 Examples of responses to the request to suggest other important training courses

Examples of suggestions relating to development of people skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>leadership people skills</i> • <i>people management skills are a must for leaders in volunteer organisations</i> • <i>leaders in volunteer brigades require better people "skills"</i> • <i>how to deal with the public and their problems within small communities.</i> • <i>communicating and working with the public</i> • <i>providing effective feedback</i> • <i>how to delegate and trust the members to do the task</i> • <i>negotiation skills</i>
Examples of suggestions related to working under pressure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>decision making on the fire ground, legal responsibilities</i> • <i>how to solidly bear the stress of chaos yet still make effective decisions under fire</i> • <i>something to do about working under pressure</i> • <i>how to deal with fatigue, exhaustion and other related events that occur dealing with wild fire situations</i> • <i>frontline management skills</i> • <i>intelligence gathering/problem solving at the incident level</i> • <i>facilitation of operation debriefs including critical incidents stress management</i> • <i>stress awareness</i> • <i>anger management</i>
Examples of Workplace Training/Instructor Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>planning and documentation for effective training outcomes and training paths</i> • <i>teaching and presentation skills - props and visual aids etc.</i> • <i>lesson/subject presentation</i>
Examples of evaluations of and opinions about current training arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>a start would be to have trainers who want to teach people as most career guys are there only to collect their pay to climb the ladder</i> • <i>all officers should be trained before promotion</i> • <i>some form of training would have been good</i> • <i>give people more notice when course is set and inform member when and what courses are available</i> • <i>chain of command need to be more enforced!</i> • <i>all courses well run by TFS instructors</i> • <i>leadership courses for paid TFS staff</i> • <i>for career firefighters to stop wasting vol time out in the field</i>
Examples of comments pertaining to delivery of courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>military type leadership course</i> • <i>7 years in the navy and 18 months in the army</i> • <i>volunteers should be trained different from permanents - remember we are only volunteers</i> • <i>more instruction and demonstration</i> • <i>real need for brigade management to get hands on experience on fire ground</i> • <i>hands on experience is more valuable than book learning classes (one on one under supervision)</i> • <i>more inter brigade training helps familiarise areas and people</i> • <i>joint service/multi agency courses (police, ambos, SES etc.)</i>

Leadership, satisfaction and intentions to remain a volunteer

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements, “Leadership in my brigade is very good” and “Volunteering in my brigade is very satisfying for me.” Very few respondents indicated that these items were not applicable (less than 2%), or failed to respond altogether (less than 3%). The extent to which respondents agreed with each of these statements is presented in Table 38 below, excluding non-responses and not applicable responses⁸⁰.

Table 38 Satisfaction with brigade leadership and volunteering

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
Leadership in my brigade is very good	4.0%	6.6%	1.7%	27.5%	60.3%	896
Volunteering in my brigade is very satisfying for me	1.5%	3.2%	1.0%	24.7%	69.6%	886

As shown in the table above, the majority of respondents found their volunteering satisfying and felt that leadership was very good. The responses of those in leadership positions were compared with those in other positions. Those currently in leadership positions ($M = 4.46$, $SD = .98$) agreed more strongly than others ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.13$) that leadership in their brigade was good⁸¹. Looked at slightly differently, whereas 13.5% of non-leaders disagreed that leadership was good, only 7.9% of those in leadership positions also disagreed. Those in leadership positions ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .68$) also agreed more so than others ($M = 4.48$, $SD = .89$) that volunteering was satisfying⁸². Whereas 2.8% of leaders were dissatisfied, 6.6% of non-leaders were dissatisfied (i.e., ticked strongly or somewhat disagree). Also, high-ranking respondents agreed more strongly than others that leadership in their brigade was good⁸³, and that volunteering was satisfying for them⁸⁴. There were no gender, age, or community differences in ratings of either leadership quality or overall satisfaction.

Respondents were also asked how likely it would be that they would continue volunteering with TFS in 12 months and 3 years time. The distributions of responses are presented in Table 39.

Table 39 How long do you think you will continue with TFS?

Item	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Don't Know	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Total Valid
How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 12 months?	2.0%	2.0%	3.7%	10.4%	81.9%	858
How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 3 years?	4.0%	4.1%	7.7%	18.7%	65.5%	908

Overall, most respondents indicated that they would probably continue volunteering in the next 12 months. Indeed, only 4% thought it was unlikely that they would continue with TFS, and less than 4% were unsure. It is worth noting, however, that there is a substantial drop in the number of respondents indicating that it was very likely they would continue to volunteer in 3 years time (82% at 12 months drops to 66% at 3 years).

Those currently occupying leadership positions ($M = 4.77$, $SD = .69$) indicated a greater likelihood than others ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .90$) that they would still be volunteers in 12 months⁸⁵. Those in leadership positions ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .98$) also rated the likelihood of continuing in three years' time to be higher than did those not currently in any leadership positions ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.11$)⁸⁶. Of those who were not leaders, 9.4%

⁸⁰ The values presented in this table do not change by more than 2% points when “not applicable” and “not stated” responses are included in the total count.

⁸¹ $t(894) = 3.83$, $p < .001$

⁸² $t(789) = 3.46$, $p = .001$

⁸³ $U = 44375$, $p < .001$

⁸⁴ $U = 45038$, $p < .001$

⁸⁵ $t(788) = 3.27$, $p = .001$

⁸⁶ $t(906) = 3.30$, $p = .001$

thought it at least somewhat unlikely that they would continue volunteering in 3 years time. The rate was lower among leaders; 6.8% thought it unlikely that they would continue volunteering.

High-ranking leaders also thought it more likely than others that they would still be a volunteer in 12 months⁸⁷, and 3 years⁸⁸ time. Additionally, there was some evidence that the drop-off from 1 to 3 years was smaller among high-ranking leaders⁸⁹; whereas 82% of these leaders indicated no change in the likelihood of remaining 72% of the remaining respondents made no change in their estimates.

Consistent with other surveys of fire service volunteers (e.g., Beatson et al., 2008), women respondents indicated that they were less likely to continue volunteering in both 12 months⁹⁰, and 3 years⁹¹ time. For example, whereas 85% of male respondents indicated that it was very likely they would continue volunteering in 12 months time, 68% of female respondents did so. On the flip side, whereas 3% of men indicated that it was unlikely they would continue volunteering, 7% of women did so. There was no gender difference in terms of the drop in likelihood from 1 to 3 years.

Demographic variables predicting intentions to remain

Further analyses were conducted to test whether a variety of demographic variables significantly predicted the respondents' self-estimated likelihood of continuing to volunteer in three years time. Age, gender, and type of community all predicted intentions to remain. Older volunteers⁹² and women⁹³ indicated a lower likelihood of continuing to volunteer in 3 years time, while participants in rural communities⁹⁴ (versus those in small towns or suburban communities) indicated a higher likelihood of continuing to volunteer. Longer length of service predicted a higher likelihood of continuing to volunteer⁹⁵ among respondents younger than 30 years of age, but did not predict likelihood of continuing in older age groups.

Do perceptions of brigade leadership and social cohesion predict intentions to remain?

The survey data suggest that respondents' perceptions of brigade leadership and social cohesion do predict intentions to remain. Moreover, leadership and social cohesion are stronger predictors of intentions to remain than any of the demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, type of community).

The association of intentions to remain with perceptions about brigade leadership and social cohesion were explored using the following scales.

Intentions to Remain. This measure comprised two items: "How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 12 months?" and "How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 3 years?"

Brigade Social Cohesion. This measure comprised five items: Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well; Conflict between members is rare; There are no problems with factions in my brigade; New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities; Brigade officers and members treat each other with respect.

Brigade Leadership.

A factor analysis of the items measuring perceptions of brigade leadership indicated that all items loaded on a single component. Thus, an average of all items (overall leadership) was computed. However, subscales were also computed so that the association between intentions to remain and intuitively distinct aspects of

⁸⁷ $U = 41065, p < .001$

⁸⁸ $U = 44370, p < .001$

⁸⁹ $U = 43145, p = .011$

⁹⁰ $U = 45235, p < .001$

⁹¹ $U = 49863, p = .001$

⁹² $\beta = -.185, t(822) = 5.36, p < .001$

⁹³ $\beta = -.126, t(822) = 3.74, p < .001$

⁹⁴ $\beta = .142, t(822) = 4.13, p < .001$

⁹⁵ $\beta = .293, t(76) = 2.67, p = .009$

leadership (e.g., perceptions of people-management skills versus perceptions of leaders' ability to get the job done) could be examined more closely.

Overall Leadership. This measure comprised all 17 items in the survey section labelled "What is the leadership in your brigade like?" More specifically, these items included: The brigade officers are fair-minded; The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable; The brigade officers are good communicators; The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member; The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising; The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members; If a brigade member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical; The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed; The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed; A new brigade chief is elected after two or three terms; The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot resolve it themselves; The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained; The brigade is not a 'one man band'; Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief; The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for; The brigade chief keeps in contact with District staff; The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another.

Leader-to-Member Relations. This measure comprised six items: The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising; The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member; If a brigade member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical; The brigade officers are good communicators; The brigade officers are fair-minded; The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another.

Leader Competence. This measure comprised four items: The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable; The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained; The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed; The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed.

Several research questions and the associated statistical analyses are presented below:

1. Does social cohesion predict intention to remain? Yes. The more cohesive the brigade, the higher the ratings on likelihood of remaining⁹⁶.
2. Does perceived overall leadership predict intention to remain? Yes. More positive evaluations of leadership predict greater intentions of remaining⁹⁷.
3. Do ratings of leader-to-member interactions predict intentions to remain? Yes⁹⁸. The more positive the ratings of leader-to-member interactions, the higher the rating on likelihood of remaining. Is this relationship significant for rank and file members, and leaders, considered separately? Yes.
4. Do ratings of leader competence predict intentions to remain? Yes⁹⁹.
5. If both leader-to-member interactions and leader competence are considered together, does one have a greater *unique* impact on intentions to remain than the other? Yes. Leader-to-member interactions significantly predict intentions to remain¹⁰⁰, whereas ratings of competence do not contribute any variation in intentions to remain *independently* of leader-to-member interaction ratings¹⁰¹.

Several additional analyses were conducted to see whether ratings of brigade safety, perceptions of planning and organisation of training, mistreatment and inclusion/exclusion also predict intentions to remain. The items used to construct the scales, and results of simple regression analyses (i.e., with no other variables entered in the regression equations) are reported below.

⁹⁶ $\beta = .293, t(824) = 8.76, p < .001$

⁹⁷ $\beta = .273, t(775) = 7.90, p < .001$

⁹⁸ $\beta = .298, t(823) = 8.97, p < .001$

⁹⁹ $\beta = .266, t(835) = 7.96, p < .001$

¹⁰⁰ $\beta = .252, t(812) = 4.92, p < .001$

¹⁰¹ $\beta = .06, t(812) = 1.06, p = .304$

Safety. This measure comprised three items: I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience; I feel safe when working with brigade members; Brigade vehicles are always driven safely and responsibly. The safer volunteers feel, the stronger their intentions to remain.¹⁰²

Training Organisation. This measure comprised two items: Brigade training sessions are well planned; Brigade training sessions are well organised. Better organization and planning of training predicts stronger intentions to remain¹⁰³.

Mistreatment. This measure comprised three items: I have not been bullied in my brigade; I have not been discriminated against in my brigade; I have not been harassed in my brigade. Lower incidences of these behaviours predict stronger intentions of remaining¹⁰⁴.

Inclusion. This measure comprised only one item: I am included in the group by all members of my brigade. Feeling included was associated with stronger intentions of remaining¹⁰⁵. It is worth noting that the association of feeling included with intending to remain was stronger than the association of intentions to remain with any of the other measures. In fact, further analysis showed that over and above the 9% of variation (in ratings of intentions to remain) accounted for by ratings of social cohesion, ratings of feeling included explained an additional 5%.

Further analyses were conducted to see if any aspects of brigade life included in the survey did *not* predict intentions to remain. Perceptions of whether or not one's brigade gets along with other agencies like Parks and SES, and whether there was an organised social program were not a significant predictors of intentions to remain (at $p < .01$).

¹⁰² $\beta = .293, t(842) = 8.89, p < .001$

¹⁰³ $\beta = .230, t(837) = 6.85, p < .001$

¹⁰⁴ $\beta = .189, t(842) = 5.59, p < .001$

¹⁰⁵ $\beta = .360, t(847) = 11.22, p < .001$

Work and TFS volunteering

A series of items concerning barriers to volunteering with TFS during working hours were presented, and participants asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed each made it hard for them to turn out during work/business hours. Table 40 shows the distribution of responses to these items, excluding those indicating that the item was “Not Applicable.” The analysis has not been confined to full-time employees, part-time employees, farm and business owners because the available categories exclude other workers (e.g., casual employees). However, separate tables are also produced for the self employed, and full time or part time employees next.

Table 40 Difficulties turning out during working hours

It is hard turning out during work/business hours because:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Valid
I work too far from the station	26.7%	17.0%	2.1%	22.9%	31.3%	712
My workplace/business/farm can't spare me	26.3%	22.4%	4.0%	24.7%	22.4%	695
The lost time would cost me or my employer too much money	35.9%	20.4%	5.3%	17.3%	21.1%	646
My employer doesn't understand why it is important	47.2%	21.0%	6.8%	11.6%	13.4%	614

The ratings made by leaders and non-leaders, on work-related difficulties in turning out, were compared. Interestingly, high-ranking leaders were less likely than others to indicate that they worked too far from the station¹⁰⁶. This suggests that there is a bias such that those who live close to the station are more likely to occupy the highest leadership positions (1st Officer and above). However, these volunteers may not necessarily be the best suited to these leadership positions.

Table 41 shows the distribution of responses for those who indicated that they were self-employed (i.e., business or farm owners) and Table 42 shows the distribution of responses for respondents indicating that they were employed on either a full or part time basis. The percentage of respondents indicating that the items were not applicable is reported in parentheses after each item. However, the values in the table exclude “not applicable” responses.

Table 41 Difficulties turning out – among the self employed

It is hard turning out during work/business hours because:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I work too far from the station (N/A = 14%)	35.3%	21.4%	3.5%	22.4%	17.4%	201
My workplace/business/farm can't spare me (N/A = 14%)	22.2%	29.5%	5.3%	30.9%	12.1%	207
The lost time would cost me or my employer too much money (N/A = 27%)	31.2%	24.9%	6.9%	21.4%	16.6%	173
My employer doesn't understand why it is important (N/A = 36%)	54.8%	21.9%	5.5%	7.5%	10.3%	146

¹⁰⁶ $U = 27237, p < .001$

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Table 42 Difficulties turning out – among part time and full time employees

It is hard turning out during work/business hours because:	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I work too far from the station (N/A = 7%)	16.6%	14.1%	1.7%	24.8%	40.5%	476
My workplace/business/farm can't spare me (N/A = 9%)	20.3%	21.6%	3.7%	26.1%	28.4%	464
The lost time would cost me or my employer too much money (N/A = 12%)	31.7%	20.8%	5.5%	18.8%	23.1%	451
My employer doesn't understand why it is important (N/A = 11%)	40.1%	23.4%	7.7%	13.3%	15.5%	444

Overall, those employed on a part time or full time basis indicated experiencing more difficulties turning out during business hours than did those who were self employed. No significant gender differences, or differences across community types, were observed.

Family and TFS volunteering

Previous research suggests that Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC) is associated with negative outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions, burnout and work-related stress (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000). Recent research with emergency services volunteers also shows a strong link between WFC and volunteer burnout (Cowlishaw, Evans & McLennan, 2009). Thus, it is important to assess the degree to which TFS volunteers find their emergency services work conflicting with family functioning.

A series of items concerning the impact of TFS volunteering on family life, and childcare responsibilities on TFS volunteering, were presented. Responses were made on a 5-point scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, with the option of indicating if the item was “Not Applicable”. Table 43 shows the distribution of responses to these items, excluding the 8-35% of respondents indicating that these items were “Not Applicable.”

Table 43 Impact of TFS volunteering on family life

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
My TFS volunteering provides me with a sense of achievement and this helps me to be a better family member	4.8%	9.4%	7.0%	41.7%	37.1%	832
TFS volunteering helps me to gain knowledge and this helps me to be a better family member	7.6%	12.1%	10.9%	41.1%	28.2%	824
It's hard to turn out because I can't leave the children	48.5%	18.0%	3.5%	16.7%	13.2%	538
My TFS volunteering keeps me from family activities more than I would like	39.3%	32.1%	3.9%	17.5%	7.2%	753
The time I spend volunteering with the brigade keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities	33.9%	34.8%	4.6%	19.6%	7.0%	784
I am often so drained when I get home after turnouts or training that it prevents me from contributing to my family	38.45	34.4%	4.3%	17.0%	5.8%	807
When I get home from the brigade I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities and responsibilities	43.9%	35.0%	3.2%	13.1%	4.8%	811

Overall, respondents indicated that the impact on family life was more positive than negative. Indeed, over 70% of respondents agreed that a sense of achievement derived from TFS volunteering and the knowledge gained from TFS volunteering helped them to be better family members. Simultaneously, more than 70% of respondents *disagreed* that their volunteering with TFS kept them from participating in family activities or contributing equally to household responsibilities.

Further analysis indicated that the items loaded on two separate factors; positive outcomes ($\alpha = .78$) and negative outcomes ($\alpha = .83$) for the family. High-ranking leaders did not differ from other respondents in terms of the perceived impact their volunteering had on their families. It would be interesting to see whether high-ranking leaders contribute more time to volunteering on a regular (e.g., weekly basis), and whether time spent on TFS activities has a greater impact on concerns with meeting family responsibilities more so for some volunteers than others. It may be the case that volunteers who are highly invested in their volunteer role *and* spend large amounts of time on fire service activities are less likely to express reservations about the impact on their family. These volunteers may however be at greater risk of allowing their volunteering to negatively impact family life, and be least aware of it. Certainly, there is some

evidence among emergency services workers to suggest that work involvement is associated with greater investment in time being on call, and that such investment predicts WFC, which in turn predicts both higher levels of volunteer burnout and lower levels of support from volunteers' partners for continued volunteer service (Cowlishaw et al., 2008).

There was some evidence that women respondents felt their volunteering had a negative impact on their family life, more so than men¹⁰⁷. Closer analysis revealed that significant differences between men and women emerged on the two items concerning volunteering keeping the respondent from equal participation in household responsibilities¹⁰⁸ and family activities¹⁰⁹. A noticeably higher percentage of men than women strongly disagreed that TFS volunteering kept them from participating in family responsibilities (46% vs. 31%) and activities (48% vs. 37%). Gender differences did not emerge on the items suggesting that volunteering left the respondents feeling frazzled or drained.

As might be expected, positive family outcomes¹¹⁰ predicted greater likelihood of remaining, and negative outcomes¹¹¹ lower likelihood of remaining, in 3 years time. Thus, greater concern about the impact of volunteering on meeting family responsibilities may be one reason women tend to serve for shorter periods in the TFS than men.

Comparisons between respondents from different types of communities did not indicate any differences in the impact of volunteering on family life, or family life on volunteering.

¹⁰⁷ $U = 29940, p = .036$

¹⁰⁸ $U = 35570, p = .001$

¹⁰⁹ $U = 33769, p = .007$

¹¹⁰ $\beta = .130, t(670) = 3.45, p = .001$

¹¹¹ $\beta = -.181, t(670) = 5.482, p < .001$

Why do you remain a volunteer with TFS?

Respondents were presented with a series of possible reasons for remaining as a volunteer with TFS. Between 756 (81.9%) and 910 (98.6%) respondents rated the extent to which they agreed with each reason for remaining. The lower response rate for the item concerning child care is most likely due to the fact that a ‘not applicable’ option was not available for selection. The level of endorsement for each statement is presented in Table 44 below, descending in order of items most strongly endorsed.

Table 44 Reasons for remaining a volunteer with TFS

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I think the TFS has an important function to perform	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%	13.5%	85.3%	910
My family is very supportive of my TFS volunteering	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%	29.2%	61.8%	887
To better protect my home and assets	3.7%	7.2%	3.4%	31.0%	54.8%	904
TFS is an important part of my community life	2.4%	6.6%	3.0%	35.3%	52.7%	910
I enjoy the responsibility	1.7%	5.4%	3.7%	36.8%	52.4%	901
I enjoy most aspects of being in the TFS	0.9%	3.4%	2.0%	43.0%	50.8%	908
I have many friends in the TFS	2.9%	9.7%	2.8%	44.7%	39.9%	899
I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day	18.5%	15.2%	19.6%	18.5%	28.2%	837
I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day (excluding those with who ticked ever Group Officer, Brigade Chief or First Officer)	19.0%	16.1%	20.6%	18.6%	25.6%	688
I can remain because I have someone to look after the children when I am called out	31.6%	10.6%	12.7%	20.1%	25.0%	756
I can remain because I have someone to look after the children when I am called out (excluding those who did not tick parent caring for under 18s)	13.8%	16.9%	6.2%	40.0%	23.1%	65
My partner is in the TFS	66.0%	7.1%	4.3%	7.3%	15.3%	805
There's no one in the community to take my place	37.2%	22.9%	7.8%	23.7%	8.4%	892

Overall, respondents indicated that they remain volunteers with TFS for predominantly positive reasons. Table 44 shows that believing the TFS has an important function to perform was the most frequently endorsed reason for continuing to volunteer with TFS. Family support was the second most strongly endorsed reason, followed closely by the motivation to protect one's home and assets. Most respondents also agreed that the responsibility, importance of volunteering to their community life, friends in the TFS and enjoyment derived from their TFS activities, were important reasons for remaining a volunteer.

The degree of family support is clearly very important to volunteer retention. These data suggest that were it not for their family's support, many of the respondents may not be so eager to continue volunteering. The large number of respondents agreeing that family support enabled them to continue volunteering reinforces previous calls to recognise the importance of managing work-family conflict.

The least popular reasons for remaining in TFS were: hoping to become an officer in the brigade, having somebody to care for the children, having a partner in the TFS, and believing that the community did not have somebody else to replace the volunteer. Nevertheless, the numbers of respondents agreeing with these reasons have important implications for the retention of volunteers. It is worth noting, for example, that almost one in two respondents agreed that hoping to become an officer was a reason for remaining. In future research it would be useful to explore whether (a) there is sufficient opportunity for many volunteers to attain such leadership positions, particularly in larger brigades, and (b) missing out on these positions will

negatively affect levels of satisfaction with the volunteering experience, and ultimately the retention of these volunteers.

It is less clear what the data about having a partner in the TFS signifies. Unfortunately, the survey did not include a question asking whether the respondents' partner was in the TFS, and a "not applicable" option was not available on the item asking if having a partner in TFS was a reason for remaining. While it appears that some respondents have left the item blank where it was not applicable, it is highly likely that many respondents for whom the item was not applicable responded "strongly disagree." Thus, it is unclear what percentage of respondents with partners in the TFS actually see this as an important reason for remaining.

While it is encouraging that the least endorsed reason for remaining concerned a belief that there was no-one else in the community to replace the respondent, it is nevertheless worth noting that almost one in three respondents still agreed that this was a reason. This would be serious cause for concern if respondents felt it was their only reason for remaining. Presumably, continuing to volunteer out of a sense of obligation rather than enjoyment could have a negative impact not only on the volunteers' performance, but also on the way in which they promote the service to potential volunteers.

Finally, it is also worth noting that over 60% of those respondents caring for children under 18 years agreed to some extent that the availability of childcare was one reason they were able to remain volunteers. Presumably, among volunteers who are also parents of young children, the availability of suitable and affordable childcare is likely to have a large impact on the extent to which they can participate in brigade activities and training.

Leaders

The responses of those currently holding a leadership position were compared with all others. As shown in Table 45, leaders agreed more strongly than others, with the following reasons for remaining: having no-one in the community to take their place¹¹², having many friends in TFS¹¹³, enjoying most aspects of volunteering¹¹⁴, hoping to become an officer¹¹⁵, and enjoying the responsibility¹¹⁶.

Table 45 Means and standard deviations for leaders' and non-leaders' reasons for remaining

Item	Leaders	Non-Leaders
I enjoy most aspects of being in the TFS	4.46 (0.74)	4.32 (0.79)
I enjoy the responsibility	4.41 (0.88)	4.24 (0.92)
I have many friends in the TFS	4.31 (0.89)	3.86 (1.12)
I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day	3.57 (1.47)	2.89 (1.39)
There's no-one in the community to take my place	2.60 (1.45)	2.25 (1.33)

The responses of those in high-ranking leadership positions were compared with those made by the remaining respondents. Those occupying the rank of 1st officer or higher agreed more strongly than others with the following statements: there's no one in the community to take my place¹¹⁷, I have many friends in the TFS¹¹⁸, I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day¹¹⁹, TFS is an important part of my community life¹²⁰, I enjoy the responsibility¹²¹, and my family is very supportive of my TFS volunteering¹²².

¹¹² $t(889) = 3.77, p < .001$

¹¹³ $t(897) = 6.59, p < .001$

¹¹⁴ $t(906) = 2.76, p = .006$

¹¹⁵ $t(835) = 6.88, p < .001$

¹¹⁶ $t(899) = 2.88, p = .005$

¹¹⁷ $U = 45326, p = .007$

¹¹⁸ $U = 42240, p < .001$

¹¹⁹ $U = 23763, p < .001$

¹²⁰ $U = 47078, p = .002$

¹²¹ $U = 46719, p = .002$

¹²² $U = 45335, p = .001$

At first glance it seems odd that those already occupying officer positions should agree more than others that they remain because they have hopes to become an officer in the future. It is likely that those occupying high-ranking leadership positions interpreted this item in one of two ways: (a) “Wanting to be an officer was one reason I remained”, or (b) “I continue to remain because I still want to hold a leadership position in the future”.

Gender

Men and women differed on only two items concerning the reasons for remaining a volunteer with TFS. Men agreed more strongly than women that they felt there was no one in the community to take their place¹²³, while women agreed more strongly than men that having a partner in TFS¹²⁴ was a reason they remained. It is unclear whether having a partner in TFS really does motivate women to stay more so than men. Since a “not applicable” option was not available for this item, the gender difference may simply be the result of a greater percentage of women than men actually having a partner in TFS.

Community Type

Community type was cross-tabulated with reasons for remaining a TFS volunteer. Significant differences in ratings were observed on the three items included in Table 46.

Table 46 Reasons for remaining by Community Type

Item	Community	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
There's no one in the community to take my place ¹²⁵	Suburban	49.7%	20.5%	10.6%	14.6%	4.6%	151
	Small Town	40.0%	24.9%	9.2%	20.5%	5.4%	185
	Rural	31.8%	22.2%	6.1%	28.7%	11.2%	491
My partner is in TFS ¹²⁶	Suburban	76.8%	4.3%	2.9%	7.2%	8.7%	138
	Small Town	74.0%	8.3%	3.6%	5.3%	8.9%	169
	Rural	59.8%	7.5%	5.0%	8.6%	19.1%	440
To better protect my home and assets ¹²⁷	Suburban	8.6%	8.6%	9.3%	31.1%	42.4%	151
	Small Town	4.4%	8.7%	4.9%	34.4%	47.5%	183
	Rural	1.8%	6.5%	1.0%	30.4%	60.3%	504

As shown in the table above those in rural communities were twice as likely as those in small towns and suburban communities to strongly agree that they remained with TFS because there was no one to take their place. It is worth noting that while 40% of those in rural communities agreed that having no one in their community was a reason for remaining, 20% of those in suburban communities, and 26% of those in small towns did so.

Respondents from rural communities were also motivated to continue volunteering with TFS for the purposes of protecting their homes and assets more so than were respondents from small towns or suburban communities. Presumably, those in rural communities perceive a greater fire threat to their homes and assets than do respondents in larger communities.

Finally, ratings on the item, “My partner is in TFS” differed according to community type. Respondents in rural communities were twice as likely as those in small towns and suburban communities to tick “strongly agree.” Unfortunately, a “not applicable” response was not available with this item. It may very well be the case that a greater percentage of respondents from rural communities have a partner in the TFS, but whether or not having a partner in the TFS is actually perceived as reason for continuing to volunteer with TFS, more so in rural than other types of communities, is unclear.

¹²³ U = 47068, p = .002

¹²⁴ U = 25671, p < .001

¹²⁵ $\chi^2(8, N=827) = 34.82, p < .001$

¹²⁶ $\chi^2(8, N=747) = 24.59, p = .002$

¹²⁷ $\chi^2(8, N=838) = 51.90, p < .001$

Factors limiting involvement in TFS

Respondents were presented with a list of issues that might limit involvement in TFS, and were asked to indicate whether each of these “often limit your [their] involvement in TFS”, on a five-point scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Respondents were also given the option of indicating that the factor was not applicable to them. Overall, very few respondents did not complete these ratings (2.4% to 4.0%) and most items were applicable to over 90% of respondents. However, the number of respondents indicating that certain items were not applicable was appreciably higher for parenting and family activities (18.1%), health problems (17.9%) and work/farm/business commitments (15.1%). Table 47 shows the distribution of ratings, excluding non-responses and “not applicable” responses.

Table 47 Factors often limiting involvement in TFS

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
TFS is too bureaucratic	12.8%	22.3%	8.3%	32.6%	24.0%	875
My business farm or work commitments	17.7%	18.6%	3.7%	38.5%	21.5%	753
TFS activities are becoming too complex	23.1%	25.6%	5.4%	30.8%	15.1%	870
The out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., petrol, phone calls)	38.8%	25.8%	4.0%	19.5%	12.0%	827
Demands of training or assessments	30.9%	30.3%	4.7%	24.1%	10.0%	829
Internal brigade politics	45.9%	21.5%	8.3%	14.4%	10.0%	824
Parenting and family activities	37.7%	25.9%	3.7%	24.1%	8.7%	727
Lack of resources provided by TFS	38.9%	32.1%	6.2%	15.0%	7.8%	845
Chores, duties and projects at home	33.7%	27.1%	4.1%	27.5%	7.7%	805
Health problems	54.5%	21.3%	4.1%	14.8%	5.3%	732

Overall, less than one in four respondents strongly agreed that any of the factors listed often limited their involvement in TFS. However, when the number of respondents agreeing somewhat is summed with the number strongly agreeing, quite large numbers of respondents (over one in two) agree that business or work commitments, and TFS bureaucracy often limit their involvement. The proportion of respondents agreeing that the complexity of TFS activities limits their involvement is also quite high (45%). Out-of-pocket expenses and the demands of training and assessments also appear to limit the involvement of a large proportion of volunteers (each affecting approximately one in three respondents). Overall then, the most limiting factors are predominantly related to the ways in which TFS operates, rather than issues external to TFS life (e.g. family responsibilities, home duties, and health problems). Thus, TFS can presumably take actions to alleviate some of these limiting factors.

Comparisons between the ratings made by men and women respondents indicated that men agreed more strongly than women that perceived bureaucracy¹²⁸ and task complexity¹²⁹ often limited their involvement. However, this difference may be due to the fact that a greater proportion of men than women respondents occupy high-ranking positions, and that those in the higher ranking positions agreed more strongly than the remaining respondents that TFS activities are becoming too complex¹³⁰ and that TFS is too bureaucratic¹³¹.

Limitations caused by bureaucracy and complexity were not limited only to those in high leadership positions. Comparisons of those currently occupying any leadership position with those not occupying a leadership position also showed leaders agreed more strongly that complexity¹³² and bureaucracy¹³³ were

¹²⁸ U = 43623, p = .001

¹²⁹ U = 43620, p = .003

¹³⁰ U = 41940, p = .001

¹³¹ U = 40571, p < .001

¹³² t(868) = 3.82, p < .001

¹³³ t(873) = 2.70, p = .006

limiting their involvement (see Table 48). Compared with 52.5% of leaders, 38.7% of the non-leaders agreed that task complexity limited their involvement. Moreover, close to two thirds of leaders (62%) agreed that TFS was too bureaucratic (the rate among non-leaders was still quite high at 51%).

Table 48 Mean ratings of task complexity and bureaucracy among leaders and non-leaders

Item	Leaders	Non-Leaders
TFS activities are becoming too complex	3.07 (1.45)	2.70 (1.41)
TFS is too bureaucratic	3.45 (1.38)	3.19 (1.38)

Scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Comparisons across age groups in 10-year intervals revealed several differences¹³⁴ between older and younger volunteers. Table 49 presents the percentage of respondents in each age group choosing the “Strongly Agree” option. Those younger than 20 years and those 70 years or more are excluded due to the small number of respondents in these groups.

Table 49 Limiting factors by Age

Item	Age				
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
My business, farm, or work commitments	27.4%	29.6%	19.2%	20.5%	15.9%
Chores, duties and projects at home	5.5%	10.8%	10.3%	5.8%	2.9%
Parenting and family activities	7.7%	19.8%	11.5%	4.7%	1.7%
Health problems	2.9%	0.0%	4.6%	9.0%	8.9%

Not surprisingly, these data show that a higher percentage of respondents in the 30-39 years age group than any other age group face limitations in TFS participation due to work and family commitments, while a higher percentage of those over 50 years (compared with other groups) are limited by health problems. Work commitments are particularly limiting for those younger than 40 years of age, while parenting commitments are especially noticeable among respondents 30-39 years of age (where 20% of respondents in this age group strongly agreed that parenting limited involvement). This is not surprising given that the median age of first child birth in Australia is 33 years for men, and 31 for women (ABS, 2008). Interestingly, the percentage of women and men indicating that parenting and family commitments were a limiting factor was no different, even in the 30-39 years age group.

The ratings made by respondents from different types of communities were compared. However, no significant differences were observed.

¹³⁴Chi squares with $p < .01$

Satisfactions from being a member of TFS

Respondents were presented with a list of statements about various satisfactions derived from their TFS volunteering, and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. The rate of response to these items was high with 901 (97.6%) to 907 (98.3%) respondents selecting one of the five options. The distribution of responses to each item is presented in Table 50.

Table 50 Satisfactions from being a member of TFS

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
As a TFS volunteer I can contribute to protecting my community	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	25.6%	73.8%	904
I am fully included in brigade activities	2.9%	5.7%	2.3%	29.6%	59.5%	902
Being a TFS volunteer allows me to learn new things and apply new skills	1.3%	2.9%	1.3%	36.6%	57.9%	907
Being in TFS makes me feel I am a valued member of the community	1.4%	2.8%	2.2%	36.2%	57.3%	905
I feel as though I have a significant role to play in my brigade	2.0%	5.6%	4.1%	35.4%	52.8%	903
Volunteering in TFS has helped me meet new friends outside the brigade	3.5%	11.4%	5.2%	36.3%	43.6%	902
TFS constantly offers new experiences and presents new challenges	2.9%	11.3%	4.8%	44.1%	37.0%	901

As shown in the table, almost three quarters of respondents strongly agreed that their volunteering with the TFS allowed them to contribute to the protection of their community. A large number of respondents also strongly agreed that (a) they felt included in brigade activities, (b) their volunteering allowed them to learn and apply new skills, and (c) TFS volunteering made them feel a valued member of the community. Relatively fewer respondents strongly agreed that they felt they had a significant role to play in their brigade, that volunteering helped them meet new friends outside the brigade, and that their volunteering constantly presented them with new experiences and new challenges. Nevertheless, very few respondents indicated strong disagreement with these statements (less than 4%).

The responses of those currently in leadership positions were compared with all others. Significant differences emerged on ratings that concerned: feeling a valued member of the community¹³⁵, having opportunities to meet friends outside the brigade¹³⁶, feeling fully included in brigade activities¹³⁷, and having a significant role to play in the brigade¹³⁸. It is perhaps worth noting that non-leaders were four times more likely than leaders to disagree that they felt they had a significant role to play (12.4% vs. 3.2%, respectively), and more than twice as likely to disagree that they were included in brigade activities (12.2% vs. 5.1%). It may be advantageous to consider including in leadership development programs some strategies leaders can adopt to enhance non-leader volunteers' perceptions that they play a significant role in their brigade. This would likely enhance identification with the brigade, and satisfaction with volunteering. Making sure that members feel included in brigade activities and decision making is also likely to improve members' identification and overall satisfaction.

¹³⁵ $t(824) = 2.12, p = .006$

¹³⁶ $t(853) = 4.97, p < .001$

¹³⁷ $t(811) = 6.11, p < .001$

¹³⁸ $t(769) = 8.03, p < .001$

Table 51 Differences in Leader and Non-Leader ratings of Satisfactions

Item	Leaders	Non-Leaders
I am fully included in brigade activities	4.56 (0.84)	4.17 (1.08)
I feel as though I have a significant role to play in my brigade	4.55 (0.74)	4.06 (1.05)
Being in TFS makes me feel I am a valued member of the community	4.52 (0.70)	4.38 (0.88)
Volunteering in TFS has helped me meet new friends outside the brigade	4.23 (1.02)	3.86 (1.20)

The responses of those in high-ranking leadership positions were also compared with all others. Those holding the rank of 1st officer or above agreed more strongly than all others with six of the seven statements about satisfaction. More so than others, high-ranking leaders indicated that they felt their TFS volunteering allowed them to: contribute to their community¹³⁹, feel a valued member of the community¹⁴⁰, have a significant role to play in the brigade¹⁴¹, help them meet new friends outside the brigade¹⁴², and face new experiences and challenges¹⁴³. Leaders also indicated that they felt more included in brigade activities¹⁴⁴.

The only significant difference between men and women respondents was that women agreed more strongly than men that TFS volunteering had allowed them to learn new things and apply new skills¹⁴⁵. This is perhaps not surprising given the different skills men and women generally acquire as a result of gendered socialisation practices in the broader community.

The ratings made by respondents from different types of communities were compared. However, no significant differences were observed on ratings of satisfaction.

¹³⁹ U = 46636, $p < .001$

¹⁴⁰ U = 45325, $p < .001$

¹⁴¹ U = 34337, $p < .001$

¹⁴² U = 43022, $p < .001$

¹⁴³ U = 43928, $p < .001$

¹⁴⁴ U = 37959, $p < .001$

¹⁴⁵ U = 50767, $p = .008$

Factors that would make volunteering easier

Several items were administered to gauge how useful several different strategies would be to make volunteering easier. Respondents were presented with a stem sentence, “It would be much easier for me as a volunteer if...”, followed with a list of factors that might make volunteering easier. Overall, few respondents failed to select either one of the five ratings (2.5%-3.1%) or the “not applicable” option. The rate of respondents indicating that an item was not applicable ranged from 5.7% to 28% (in the case of the item referring to one’s employer). The distribution of responses to each item is presented in Table 52, excluding those who answered “not applicable” or made no response.

Table 52 Factors that would make volunteering easier

Item	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don’t Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
We all accepted mentoring in all roles and levels of the TFS	8.8%	9.8%	10.5%	35.3%	35.6%	845
There was a mentoring program (one-on-one guidance from a more experienced member) to help recruits in their first year	15.1%	14.8%	9.4%	33.2%	27.5%	810
There was a mentoring program (one-on-one guidance from a more experienced member) to help recruits in their first year (<i>excluding those with more than one years experience</i>)	8.1%	19.4%	12.9%	35.5%	24.2%	62
My employer better understood the role of TFS volunteers	35.5%	17.4%	7.1%	18.8%	21.2%	637
I could catch up with training or assessments at nearby brigades	23.4%	24.0%	8.9%	25.4%	18.2%	807
I didn’t have to worry about leaving my property or family unprotected when I turn out	28.6%	24.5%	5.9%	24.8%	16.2%	766
The atmosphere in the brigade was more harmonious	39.0%	26.2%	5.8%	15.7%	13.3%	813
TFS activities took less of my time	26.1%	33.9%	7.3%	23.4%	9.2%	834

As shown in Table 52, the items endorsed most strongly by respondents were those relating to a mentoring program. Over two thirds of respondents agreed that volunteering would be easier for them if (a) everyone accepted mentoring in all roles and levels of TFS, and (b) there was a mentoring program to help new recruits. Importantly, the percentage of respondents agreeing that a mentoring program to help new recruits in their first year would make volunteering easier, was also high (about 60%) among respondents whose length of service was calculated to be 1 year or less.

Almost half of all the respondents agreed that being able to catch up with training or assessments at nearby brigades would be helpful, and about 40% thought a better understanding of the role of TFS and volunteers among employers would make volunteering easier. Almost 30% of respondents agreed that a more harmonious brigade atmosphere would make volunteering easier.

Interestingly, those in leadership positions ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.39$) did not agree as strongly as others ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.50$) that making the atmosphere in the brigade more harmonious would make volunteering easier¹⁴⁶. Comparisons of high ranking leaders with all others also confirmed this¹⁴⁷. This difference is probably due to leaders perceiving fewer problems with brigade harmony than other respondents (see What is it like in your brigade?).

¹⁴⁶ $t(790) = 3.85$, $p < .001$

¹⁴⁷ $U = 37285$, $p = .005$

Of those respondents not currently occupying a leadership position, 34.7% agreed to some extent that improving brigade harmony would make volunteering easier. In comparison, 21.3% of leaders agreed with this statement. This suggests that it may be particularly useful for leadership development programs to emphasize the importance of (a) accurately gauging the level of disharmony in one's brigade, and (b) taking actions to improve it.

No gender differences or type-of-community differences were observed on the ratings of factors that would make volunteering easier.

Other thoughts about TFS leadership, training or support

In the final part of the survey respondents were asked to, “write any other thoughts you have about TFS brigade leadership, leadership training, or District support for brigades.” Respondents were also encouraged to add additional pages with their comments if the available space (four lines) was insufficient. Of the 923 questionnaires returned, 345 (37.4%) included further comments, some attaching up to four additional pages to express their views. These responses were coded according to the first mentioned or most emphasized theme, and formed several major categories broadly relating to: issues associated with training (91), negative evaluations of various aspects of leadership (62), positive evaluations of leadership (42), financial burdens and initiatives (28), resources (17), expectations about TFS staffing arrangements (14), opinions about attracting the right people to brigade leadership positions (10), as well as several miscellaneous comments that did not fit easily into the other categories. Details of the types of comments made in each these broad categories are provided below. The categories are presented in descending order of the number of comments classified into each. Table 53 lists the broad categories and frequency with which they occurred.

Table 53 Categories of comments

Comment category	Frequency
Training	91
Negative comments about leadership	62
Positive comments about TFS	42
The financial burdens and incentives of volunteering with TFS	28
Expectations about TFS staffing arrangements	14
The purpose of volunteering with TFS	11
Getting the right people in TFS leadership positions	10
Miscellaneous other comments	60

Training

More comments (91) were made about training issues than any other topic. Table 54 summarizes the types of comments made about training, and examples of those mentioned by seven or more respondents are provided next.

Table 54 Types of comments made about training

Type of comment	Frequency
Negative comment on training requirements	17
Would like more opportunity to participate in training courses & more information about when and where training will be available	15
Need leadership courses for chiefs and officers	12
Difficulties attending training (out of area/inconvenient times)	9
Want ongoing guidance (and monitoring) from staff with organizing training sessions	7
Would prefer courses/training delivery to be more practical than theoretical	7
Courses to be more structured and run at more regular and timely intervals	6
Want Inter-brigade and interagency training and networking	6
More competent/dedicated trainers from TFS	4
Greater recognition of prior learning at other institutions (e.g. TAFE, military)	3
Timely (and accurate) recognition of TFS training	2
Leadership training to include a ‘team-building’ component	1
Logistics courses wanted	1
Follow-up evaluations and feedback after courses wanted	1

Table 55 Examples of negative comments about training requirements

Examples of negative comments about training requirements

- *Problems [with finding a new brigade chief] caused by number of courses requested to train up and time and commitment needed*
- *As a well trained firefighter I resent the pressure (obligation) to attend weekly training where frequently little or nothing new is learned*
- *Training - requirements are too bureaucratic just need to go to the fire and put it out as soon as possible.*
- *I believe that the focus on the amount of courses required to be done formally is making membership an onerous task.*
- *Too much paper work for training*
- *TFS is becoming obsessed with training that is not really appropriate*
- *Being a volunteer is too much like a full time job. You knock off work and then you go to training and it's like a job you get nothing for. It used to be fun, but now you have to do so much training and courses. There is no incentive for anyone to join*
- *I would like to point out that I joined as a volunteer, not for formal training or ongoing training- just to be a volunteer; it would be more beneficial for my group to have better equipment than pieces of paper with our achievements on it which mean nothing*
- *I know OH & S has a role to play but we also have a part to play in protecting our fellow man/neighbour - by too much training bureaucracy we are sending too many people away.*
- *Qualified training needs to be simplified as volunteers don't get the time to do the accredited training. This could be done at our brigade using equipment/appliance.*

Table 56 Examples of comments about training opportunities

Examples of comments about greater opportunity to participate in leadership training, and communication about such opportunities

- *It is often difficult to get into some training courses. Little or no explanation is given when unsuccessful getting into courses run by training services*
- *I've been in for over three years and haven't been accepted for a single external or internal training course???*
- *Training courses should be offered to all members regardless of how many other members of that brigade currently trained on that course.*
- *We have several qualified cert IV trainers in our brigade who have attempted to gain TFS accreditation to train our own members and others but are continually overlooked or ignored*
- *beyond the standard public safety training package competency courses there are no leadership related courses offered to volunteers.*
- *The brigade and TFS has not showed me or officers any leadership training.*
- *Training program provided by TFS generally has been somewhat problematic in that planning seems rather ad hoc leaving far too short a timeframe to consider what courses to do and fit them into a busy life.*
- *There is a lack of leadership course by District office*
- *I would have liked to get better leadership training before / on election as an officer*

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Table 57 Examples of comments about training design and delivery guidance

Examples of comments about guidance and support from TFS in designing and delivering training

- *Training days for new members - programme to be devised by PAID TFS personnel or Officers*
- *Guidance model for fortnightly brigade training program - 1 hour modules*
- *A greater monitoring of training activities in brigades and officers efforts to train members*
- *To keep the training more at a set level not to left to individual Brigades to assess their own competencies.*
- *A course teaching how to take training in our own brigade in more of a practical sense.*
- *More training to be held in station delivered by VTI or permanent instructors*

Table 58 Examples of comments about leadership training for leaders

Examples of comments about leadership training for chiefs and officers

- *We need to make sure people that hold officer positions are qualified to hold these positions.*
- *Brigade chiefs should do a management training package each time elected to maintain their knowledge and direction that the TFS is going.*
- *As for brigade chiefs: - there should be course in people management, problem solving and how to speak face to face in active fire situations*
- *For leadership training "people management" skills are THE most important thing.*
- *PR Training required, leaders need good overall skills. Brigade leaders can make or break a brigade by not having these skills*
- *Would like to see (especially experience) good debriefing after training exercises and incidents and would suggest it becomes a part of the syllabus of promotions & leadership training*

Table 59 Examples of comments about training attendance

Examples of comments about difficulties attending training

- *Training being held outside of our areas makes it hard for those of us with limited time to attend*
- *as for training courses, there needs to be more flexibility time-wise*
- *Often too tired after work to attend weekly training*
- *It is difficult for volunteers to get the time to attend courses outside their area.*
- *Training is hard to get to when it is outside our district. Also training is usually of a weekend which eats into family time.*
- *Full w/end training is hard to attend when looking at work/life balance. W/end training needs to be very limited - break down into 3 or 4 3hr nights.*
- *Training courses involving overnight stays are out of the question for many members in the more remote areas*

Table 60 Examples of comments about type of training

Examples of comments about more practical than theoretical training

- *Keep theory to minimum and more practical*
- *As valuable as courses are bush firefighting skills need to be honed on the fireground*
- *I feel brigade chiefs should be able to sign off or qualify members for the basic core element courses so members can learn these skills and practice them within the brigade and be qualified instead of having to attend 16 hour courses and come away forgetting*
- *We need more practical experience - with e.g. actually fighting a fire*
- *Simplify training i.e. nights and on the job, through fires attended*
- *More involvement with firefighting training at regional headquarters - preferably live fire training*

Table 61 Examples of comments about adequate resources

Examples of comments about the adequacy of resources

- *We are in desperate need of a fire station at [brigade name]*
- *We need to be able to get items that are needed quickly*
- *When asking for standpipe washers it should be overnight NOT take two weeks to get as it is an operational requirement to have them.*
- *Whoever is in control of new truck distribution needs a kick in the arse. We have highest calls in Tamar district and oldest trucks NOT GOOD ENOUGH! (When someone gets killed from trucks not starting someone will get an arse kicking!)*
- *I believe that a lot more could be accomplished when new volunteers (active) start at a brigade as far as the time it takes to obtain gear (PPE)*
- *The current budget process makes it hard to obtain, maintain and run the brigade in the areas of clothing, communications and maintenance*
- *Difficulty in getting necessary equipment from district, time it takes to get promised gear from district*

Negative comments about leadership

A total of 62 respondents' comments focussed on negative aspects of leadership. The most frequent observations conveyed (a) a disharmony between career and volunteer members, (b) difficulties with those occupying the brigade leadership positions, and (c) dissatisfaction with brigade politics and factionalism.

Table 62 Negative comments about leadership

Negative Comments	
Comments about career-volunteer relationships	19
Negative comment about brigade leadership (7 about brigade chief in particular)	16
Brigade politics and factionalism in general	14
Negative comments about District support	8
Comments about negative attitudes toward women and/or offensive innuendo	4
Negative comment about other brigades taking over at incidents	1

Table 63 Examples of negative comments about career-volunteer relations

Examples of negative comments about career-volunteer relations

- *Permanent members should show more respect for volunteers as most have more knowledge outside of TFS than they do*
- *Career firefighters often lack respect for volunteers.*
- *Would like to see more focus on breaking down barriers between volunteer, career & retained streams.*
- *The main difficulty I encounter in the TFS is the lack of genuine respect of volunteers by most career TFS members*
- *I strongly think the barriers between career fire person and their volunteer backup brigades (us) need to be broken down. We don't want their jobs we just want to assist them to do a professional job on the fire ground.*
- *Staff need to be continually aware of the value of local knowledge - not discount people knowing less because they are volunteers.*
- *In the TFS today us volunteers are not fully recognised by career firefighters or the union*

Table 64 Examples of negative comments about brigade leadership

Examples of negative comments about brigade leadership

- *Sadly there is not enough commitment from 2nd and 3rd officers. They give the impression they don't care or are too good for volunteers and only turn up when they know permanent TFS staff are turning up.*
 - *The leadership in our brigade is not well liked in the community. This makes it hard to retain and attract new members.*
 - *There is a lack of communication from our officers who don't pass much info onto the members*
 - *We have a disruptive 2nd officer whose presence (when he attends) makes it stressful and unproductive for all other brigade members.*
 - *In our brigade it is run like a dictatorship*
 - *The TFS at [brigade name] need surprise spot checks, the chief is lazy, chauvinistic, rude and arrogant*
 - *I am currently a 1st officer in a brigade with a dysfunctional chief who is the root cause of conflict. The TFS has done little to remove him after repeated reports of his bullying behaviour/aggression and alcohol use.*
 - *Am concerned that our chief does not have the time/motivation to fulfil his role. Does not delegate.*
 - *Our present Chief has very poor skills in communicating with other members*
 - *Current chief is a one man band!! Does not take a role in training exercises. Attends all incidents although he works 20 kms away. No other officer has had the opportunity to control an incident in the last two years.*
-

Table 65 Examples of negative comments about brigade politics

Examples of negative comments about brigade politics and factionalism

- *Too much factional squabbling in our brigade*
 - *Mandatory elections should be held, anonymous voting - we have had the same chief for 15-20 years.*
 - *Problems within brigades when 9 members of a 16 person brigade are all related. Family members and all vote for the same Brigade chief every 5 years, thereby not allowing any change. They have no leadership ability or experience.*
 - *Our brigade is somewhat factionalised (sadly). as a new member I often feel left out*
 - *I believe officers (especially in urban areas) should be appointed taking knowledge, skills and experience into account rather than being the "popularity contest" that it currently is. In my view officers tend to make up the rules to suit themselves.*
 - *When this brigade chief has a disagreement with the group officer or TFS they start a whispering campaign to discredit the chief and force an election. Meetings are sometimes "stacked" for such an election.*
 - *Officer elections dodgy in my opinion/experiences same incumbents re-elected.*
 - *[Brigade name] is very family run, even at elections they make sure they get the right votes; no-one else stands a chance.*
 - *The last elections were rigged with the aid of group officer*
-

Table 66 Examples of negative comments about District Support

Examples of negative comments about District Support

- *There is NO district support. TFS takes volunteers for granted - there should be equality between paid, retained & volunteer (TFS @ fault).*
- *I have stepped back from volunteering due to the rubbish that goes on at the brigade. When I spoke to the district officer he gave no support to my concerns, told me it was a local issue.*
- *A recent episode of possible bullying from our district officer to our brigade chief is unhelpful and only creates a sense of lack of support. To all volunteer members.*
- *District support is poor especially with equipment.*
- *District officer has point blank refused to assist with conflict resolution and training for incompetent 1st officer with my brigade.*

Table 67 Examples of negative comments about attitudes and offensive innuendo

Examples of negative comments about attitudes toward women and offensive innuendo

- *It would be appreciated if they would accept that bullying and unacceptance of females holding rank is rife through their ranks top to bottom.*
- *I am really disappointed with my brigade and the "TFS" in general. It's a bit of a boys club*
- *As a gay firefighter who is not out to his other firefighter team, the innuendos can be very off putting! What has sexual preference got to do with fighting fires!!!?*

Positive comments about TFS

There were 42 respondents whose comments were characterised by predominantly positive evaluations of brigade leadership, training, and/or district support. Examples of these comments are provided in Table 68.

Table 68 Positive comments about TFS volunteering

Examples of positive comments about volunteering with TFS

- *We are a smaller rural brigade, and overall we seem to be looked after pretty well with all our needs and wants, i.e. clothing, equipment etc. all members get on well together which makes it a good brigade to be in.*
- *I find everything to be very professional and well-organised*
- *The TFS is overall, a well run capable organization that I am proud to be associated with, and, would recommend the same to others*
- *I love my brigade! Joining really helped me integrate into my new community when I first relocated to my new area. My brigade chief and all other members are great mates even outside of TFS*
- *I have found my brigade leadership informative and fully inclusive - supportive in obtaining training and skills from an accessible district office - training is varied and interesting - the brigade is harmonious and enjoyable to be a part of.*
- *I believe strongly that TFS @ brigade, district training do a very good job*
- *TFS provides adequate support to brigade leaders and members through various courses offered, and support of District officers and field staff*
- *I am quite satisfied being a member in our brigade. Leadership is strong and we do get good support from other districts.*
- *I love it. If I am at home I will respond to calls. I enjoy working hard at fires and having the support of everyone around me as we head towards the same goal, control and extinguish! Beers at the station after are great too!*
- *The district staff are very good and if we need any gear or help in any form they are here. All are very friendly and if you turn out to a job and they are there they will even if they outrank you do what you ask if in control of fire*
- *The TFS training and support are exemplary.*
- *We have wonderful staff (district) in south. TFS are extremely supportive.*
- *TFS district support in our area is exceptionally good and very well delivered*

Comments concerning financial burdens and incentives

Respondents made a variety of comments about (a) the financial burdens their TFS volunteering activities entailed, (b) different types of compensatory schemes that would help ease that burden, and (c) concerns with equality in existing compensatory arrangements. These types of concerns were mentioned prior to any other comments by 28 of the respondents. While some responses were general, others provided more specific details about the types of costs they incurred and the types of compensation schemes they would like TFS to consider.

Examples of general statements pertaining to the financial burdens of volunteering included:

- *I feel no volunteer should be out of pocket for expenses from volunteering. A lot of time and effort is put in to it and a lot of people don't expect anything in return but there should be something available.*
- *Sometimes the out of pocket expenses are a burden*
- *I don't know about the leadership but as a volunteer my biggest limitation is out of pocket expenses*

References to the specific types of costs incurred by volunteering included the following: lost wages or earnings and annual leave, travel expenses such as fuel and sometimes accommodation, phone, internet, and the cost of obtaining heavy-rigid licenses to drive brigade vehicles.

Suggestions for compensation included (a) reimbursement of costs, (b) a stipend or allowance for various costs, (c) some kind of tax exemption or rates rebate, (d) payments for turnouts and training, (d) an army-reserve type system that compensates employers, and (e) retainer payment for key personnel.

Several respondents noted that reimbursements for some expenses (such as fuel costs associated with attendance at training courses) were available in principle but that the time spent processing some claims was unreasonable (e.g. a wait of up to six months in one case, and more in another), or considered onerous given the claimants' volunteer status. As one respondent put it, *"to be reimbursed is a pain. You are after all only a volunteer."*

In addition to suggesting various compensation schemes, and the limitations of some existing provisions, several respondents also suggested specific conditions or requirements that could be used to minimize the cost of any compensation plans. These suggestions included (a) claiming only for attendance at fires or courses of 10 or more hour's duration, (b) a cap at 5 days wages or \$500 per year for attendance at large-scale fires, (c) claims only for callouts attended during normal working hours, and (d) claiming only for incidents also attended by Parks and Wildlife employees.

Several respondents also noted that the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers benefit a variety of stakeholders including state and federal governments, local councils, and insurance companies. It may be the case that such stakeholders would consider contributing to the development and/or implementation of some kind of compensation scheme – particularly if it is made clear to these stakeholders that (a) declining volunteer numbers threaten the viability of many brigades, and (b) the costs of compensating volunteers would be substantively lower than the cost of either not having a fire brigade (including political costs, costs of life and asset loss) or having to attract full time paid fire fighters to staff local brigades.

Finally, several of the comments focussed on concerns with equal treatment. Two respondents suggested that some volunteer brigades were paid for turnouts while others were not, and that either all brigades should be paid or none paid at all.

Expectations about TFS staffing arrangements.

A total of 14 comments were made about staffing arrangements. One respondent indicated that they would like the TFS to consider providing towns of a certain size one permanent daytime staff member to take responsibility for several tasks including bookwork, vehicle maintenance, and the organisation of training courses. However, the remainder of the comments expressed (a) some dissatisfaction concerning the frequency with which district and training officers were replaced, (b) some scepticism about the motivations for such changes, and (c) a desire for TFS staff to provide more frequent in-person interaction with the brigade. Examples are provided below:

- *TFS need to keep staff in same positions and not swap staff about, this really upsets the TFS volunteers.*
- *Training and district staff positions are applied to gain promotion, and then they move on. No continuity is apparent; the hard decisions are left to the next appointed to the position.*
- *The training division is staffed by career officers who are on the career ladder. The TFS uses these positions to train their career firefighters and the individuals are constantly changing.*
- *Changing of field officers to enhance their promotional standing, when these field officers have very little to no idea on volunteers*
- *TFS need to look at having more stability in district positions - don't keep changing people.*
- *District staff and permanents need to get out to volunteer brigades for more mentoring/social interaction.*
- *Never seeing District staff except at the calls (they don't know us).*
- *There is little or no communications with TFS and brigade to keep us updated with what's happening in the TFS. Would suggest that a visit on a training night every so often would let us know that the TFS does still exist.*
- *Increased district contact with Brigades would be good - especially immediately following a change in district staff - This would enable new District staff to become known to the Brigades they manage.*
- *All district officers coming to stations on a training night so all members know who they are and what they do, informally.*
- *It would be good to have more visits from the district to keep us more informed.*

Comments on purpose of volunteering with TFS

Eleven respondents' comments focussed on their own or the brigade's attitude toward TFS volunteering, as an activity primarily concerned with fighting fires. Many stressed that members saw the brigade's purpose as being there to fight fires when the need arose, rather than to worry about other TFS commitments or rules and regulations. Examples are included below:

- *On Flinders Island we are in the TFS to fight fires not to socialise. If we have a fire we all attend anyway, some of us just want to know a bit more how to fight fires.*
- *TFS need to understand that brigade's like ours are supported by me and my peers to protect our local property. Not to have TFS as our sole purpose in life. TFS is a great resource for protecting our state. We get a bit sick of bureaucratic requirements*
- *Our brigade has members working state-wide and it is very difficult to assemble all members together. Training is very limited because of this but members turn out when needed.*
- *Too much emphasis on formal positions within the whole TFS. Too much like the military. More emphasis on being ready to do the job when needed.*
- *I love being a volunteer fire fighter, but sometimes the "line on the map" gives me the shits if we are close to an emergency we should be called it should not come down to a line on a map, we should both go.*
- *TFS is now attending motor vehicles accidents; I am not 100% agreeable for originally I joined to fight fires.*

- *The majority of these questions are not relevant to the way we run the brigade. When there is a fire or other emergency we just turn out and do the job like we did in January 2008.*

Getting the right people in leadership positions

Ten respondents commented on the need to attract the “right” people to brigade leadership positions. As shown in the selected excerpts, below, respondents noted that suitability for leadership positions should be determined by more than availability, popularity, or ego-involvement.

- *All prevention officers need training before thinking of becoming officers, elected by skill, not popularity*
- *Often, it is obvious that SOME brigades have officers who want the prestige but not the responsibility & sometimes the ability. Nice blokes are not always good leaders.*
- *The brigade needs to carefully vet people who want power or to climb the ranks. These people are very often insecure, hopeless and dangerous in extreme conditions. This is a very dangerous occupation and we need competent, intelligent and level headed people*
- *You do not need dictators as leaders and unfortunately because a lot of people don't want responsibility leaders get voted in because there's no one else wants the job.*
- *Roles are often filled by people in smaller brigades simply because they are willing. TFS needs to target people that may be more appropriate for roles but do not step forward. A bit less bureaucracy and more support may encourage these people to take on leadership roles*
- *Too much paper work puts off most people and as a consequence you often don't get the "natural" leaders at the helm.*
- *The Hero officer is a danger when "they know best attitude" overrides training skills and knowledge and common sense.*

Miscellaneous comments

Finally, a variety of other comments were made. It was not entirely clear how these were directly related to the subject of brigade leadership, leadership training, or District support. Nevertheless, a summary of the types of statements made is presented in Table 69.

Table 69 Miscellaneous comments

Type of comment	Frequency
Comment on factors affecting respondents participation in TFS activities	9
Comment on factors affecting respondents views	8
Comments about adequate recognition and understanding of volunteers services (from TFS, community, government – state and local, insurance companies, employers)	7
Comment that respondent has nothing to add	6
Not clear what respondent was trying to say	6
Comment on need to attract more volunteers or difficulties attracting new volunteers	6
Negative comment about survey or its intent	5
Mixed evaluation of leadership	4
Comments that juniors training is used by some as a child minding service	2
Comment that more information about volunteers roles and qualifications at different stages of their service would be helpful	2
Comment on quality of food at fire ground	1
Opinion that maintaining a high standard of leadership skills will be difficult if leadership positions are to be rotated regularly	1
Comment: It's not just about the Brigade, its networking and participating in all community activities. The Brigade and Community working as one	1
Comment about the difficulties in leaving work to attend multiple callouts	1
Comment that SMS communication regarding callouts would be useful	1

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Appendix A – The questionnaire

Volunteer Leadership Development: Survey of Tasmania Fire Service Volunteers



The TFS values its volunteers. To find ways to make things easier for volunteers, TFS has asked the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (at La Trobe University) to survey members about brigade leadership and support.

All information will be kept confidential. This survey does NOT go back to TFS. It is only seen by the researchers at La Trobe University in Melbourne. No identifying information will be given to the TFS.

This questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. It is for all TFS volunteers aged 18 years and over.

Please fill out the questionnaire and post it back using the reply paid envelope as soon as possible and not later than Sunday, 11th January, 2009.

1.

Which TFS Region are you in? Please tick one ☐ Northern ☐ North Western ☐ South Eastern

2.

Please provide the following information about your brigade:

About how many members? Active:, Non-Active: Is there a Junior or Cadet program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

About how many fires/incidents does your brigade turn out to each year in total?

And about how many:	Structure fires	Grass & scrub fires	MVAs	Other incidents
The local community is: (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/> A suburb of a city or large town	<input type="checkbox"/> A small town	<input type="checkbox"/> A small rural community	
Do you live? (tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/> In a suburban house/flat/unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle block < 20Ha	<input type="checkbox"/> On a working farm	

3.

Are you classified as an: Active Member or Non-Active Member? (please circle one)

4.

Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female What year were you born? 19..... What year did you volunteer with TFS?

Were you born in Australia?: ☐ Yes ☐ No
If No: What year did you arrive in Australia? What country were you born in?

5.

What is it like being in your brigade? Please tick to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My brigade lets me know what's going on					
The brigade is well-disciplined					
I am included in the group by all the members of my brigade					
Brigade members attend training regularly					
Brigade officers and members treat each other with respect					
There is an organised social program					
Brigade vehicles are always driven safely and responsibly					
The training program is well planned					
Brigade training sessions are well organised					
I have not been bullied in my brigade					
I have not been discriminated against in my brigade					
I have not been harassed in my brigade					
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well					
Elections are fair, open, and honest					
All the members can take part in decision making					
Conflict between members is rare					
I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill & experience					
I feel safe when working with brigade members					
There are no problems with factions in my brigade					
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities					
I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities					
My brigade gets along well with other brigades					

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What is it like being in your brigade? <i>Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My brigade gets along well with other agencies like Parks and SES					

6.

What is the leadership in your brigade like? <i>Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The brigade officers are fair-minded					
The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable					
The brigade officers are good communicators					
The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member					
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming & criticising					
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members					
If a member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical					
The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed					
The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed					
A new brigade chief is elected after two or three terms					
The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot solve it by themselves					
The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained					
The brigade is not a "one man band"					
Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief					
The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for					
The brigade chief keeps in contact with District staff					
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another					

7.

How important are these brigade leadership skills? <i>Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree that they are important</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Delegating tasks appropriately						
Holding members accountable for tasks they are responsible for						
Promoting teamwork among brigade members						
Resolving conflicts and disputes among brigade members						
Promoting the brigade's needs at Group, District and Region						
Mentoring members						
Managing member discontent and factionalism						
Helping new members mix in with the brigade						
Involving members in brigade decision making						
Developing members so they can move into leadership roles						
Disciplining members fairly						
Making sure members are kept informed about brigade issues						

8.

How important are these brigade leader behaviours? <i>Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree that they are important</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Honest and trustworthy					
Fair and not taking sides					
Set a good example					
Keep up to date in skills and knowledge					
Delegate tasks to other members					
Listen to people's concerns					
Understand people's feelings					
Keep a sense of humour					
Show good judgement					
Follow through and do what they say they will do					
Promote the interests of the brigade to TFS and outside organisations (e.g. local council)					
Develop a vision for the brigade and support members to achieve that vision					
Keep an open mind about new ideas and other points of view					
Balance members' family, work and brigade demands					

9.

How long do you think you will continue with the TFS? <i>For each of the following please tick to show how likely it is that you will stay in TFS</i>	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Don't Know	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 12 months?					
How likely is it that you will still be a TFS volunteer in 3 years?					

TFS Leadership Survey

10.

What are good ways for members to become good brigade leaders? <i>Please tick to show how much you agree or disagree that they are useful</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Training courses run by the brigade					
Training courses run by experts in leadership and management					
On-the-job learning as you move through the ranks					
Mentoring by more experienced members					
Residential training courses away from the brigade					
Good leaders are born not made					

11.

How important are training courses in these leadership skills? <i>Please tick a box to show how important or unimportant each of the following would be</i>	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Don't Know	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Managing Brigades					
Developing Teams					
People Management Skills					
Resolving Conflicts and Disputes					
Ensuring Workplace Fairness					
Running Meetings					
Effective Face-to-Face Communication					
Effective Written Communication					
Inducting and Mentoring New Brigade Members					
Supervising Work Groups					
Please suggest other training courses in leadership skills that might be important:					

12.

Brigade leadership, time, work, business and family <i>For each of the following, please tick to show how much you agree or disagree.</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Leadership in my brigade is very good						
Volunteering in my brigade is very satisfying for me						
It is hard to turn out during my work/business hours because:						
...I work too far from the fire station						
...my workplace/business/farm can't spare me						
...my employer doesn't understand why it is important						
...the lost time would cost me or my employer too much money						
It's hard to turn out because I can't leave the children						
My TFS volunteering keeps me from family activities more than I would like.						
TFS volunteering helps me to gain knowledge and this helps me to be a better family member						
The time I spend volunteering with the brigade keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities.						
I am often so drained when I get home after turnouts or training that it prevents me from contributing to my family.						
My TFS volunteering provides me with a sense of achievement and this helps me be a better family member						
When I get home from the brigade I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities and responsibilities.						

13.

Why do you remain a volunteer with TFS? <i>For each of the following please tick to show how much you agree or disagree.</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
There's no-one in the community to take my place					
I have many friends in the TFS					
My partner is in the TFS					
I enjoy most aspects of being in the TFS					
I think TFS has an important function to perform					
I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day					
TFS is an important part of my community life					
I enjoy the responsibility					
To better protect my home and assets					
I can remain because I have someone to look after the children when I am called out					
My family is very supportive of my TFS volunteering					

TFS Leadership Survey

14.

The following things often limit my involvement in TFS:

Please tick to show how much you agree or disagree with the following

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
TFS activities are becoming too complex						
TFS is too bureaucratic						
My business, farm or work commitments						
Health problems						
Demands of training or assessments						
Lack of resources provided by the TFS						
Internal brigade politics						
The out-of-pocket expenses of membership (e.g. petrol, phone calls)						
Chores, duties and projects at home						
Parenting and family activities						

15.

Satisfactions from being a member of TFS:

Please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Being a TFS volunteer allows me to learn new things and apply new skills					
Being in TFS makes me feel I am a valued member of the community					
As a TFS volunteer I can contribute to protecting my community					
Volunteering in TFS has helped me meet new friends outside the brigade					
I am fully included in brigade activities					
TFS constantly offers new experiences and presents new challenges					
I feel as though I have a significant role to play in my brigade					

16.

It would be much easier for me as a volunteer if:

Please tick to show how much you agree or disagree with the following

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
TFS activities took less of my time						
The atmosphere in the brigade was more harmonious						
I could catch-up with training or assessments at nearby brigades						
My employer better understood the role of TFS volunteers						
I didn't have to worry about leaving my property or family unprotected when I turn out						
There was a mentoring program (one-on-one guidance from a more experienced member) to help recruits in their first year						
We all accepted mentoring in all roles and levels of the TFS						

17.

What is your employment status? *Please tick all that apply*

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business owner with employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Business owner without employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm owner with employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm owner without employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Home duties | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent caring for children under 18 | |

18.

Formal positions held in your brigade?			Any other formal brigade or TFS positions you:
Tick <u>all</u> that you have ever held	Tick the <u>one</u> you hold now		...have ever held:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group Officer	...currently hold:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brigade Chief	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First Officer	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leading Firefighter	

19.

We would like you write any other thoughts you have about TFS brigade leadership, leadership training, or District support for brigades. If you need to, please put additional pages with your comments in the reply-paid envelope.

Thank you for providing this feedback about brigade leadership in TFS. Please post the completed questionnaire back to the Bushfire CRC at La Trobe University using the reply-paid envelope supplied as soon as possible.

This survey is being conducted by the Bushfire CRC Volunteerism Project team at La Trobe University. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Project Officer, Adrian Birch:

Bushfire CRC
School of Psychological Science
La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic. 3086

Phone: (03) 9479 1829
Email: a.birch@latrobe.edu.au
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Appendix B – Statistics for Leaders vs. Others Comparisons

The following tables provide the relevant statistics produced for comparisons between leaders and non-leaders, and between high-ranking leaders and other respondents. Independent samples t tests were conducted for the leaders versus non-leaders comparisons. Although the data was not normally distributed, t tests are robust to such violations when sample sizes are large and equal. The more conservative Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted for comparisons between high-ranking leaders and all other respondents due to the unequal sample sizes involved in these comparisons along with violations of the homogeneity of variance and normality assumptions, to which parametric statistics are sensitive (i.e., not robust).

Table 70 Differences between leader and non-leader ratings of brigade life

Item	Currently Leaders		Not Currently Leaders		Cohen d	t-test
	n	M (SD)	n	M (SD)		
*I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities	472	4.58 (0.67)	442	4.20 (0.97)	.46	t(771) = 6.69, $p < .001$
*I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience	472	4.65 (0.75)	442	4.30 (1.01)	.39	t(811) = 5.96, $p < .001$
*The brigade lets me know what's going on	472	4.47 (0.86)	443	4.10 (1.11)	.37	t(913) = 5.64, $p < .001$
*My brigade gets along well with other brigades	471	4.62 (0.70)	443	4.33 (0.87)	.37	t(848) = 5.39, $p < .001$
*I am included in the group by all members of my brigade	469	4.55 (0.83)	442	4.23 (1.07)	.33	t(909) = 5.19, $p < .001$
*Elections are fair, open and honest	473	4.56 (0.92)	441	4.22 (1.15)	.33	t(842) = 4.96, $p < .001$
*All the members take part in decision making	474	4.34 (1.01)	442	3.98 (1.20)	.32	t(914) = 5.00, $p < .001$
I feel safe when working with brigade members	469	4.63 (0.72)	445	4.41 (0.93)	.26	t(834) = 4.08, $p < .001$
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities	472	4.67 (0.70)	443	4.47 (0.89)	.25	t(839) = 3.71, $p < .001$
Brigade training sessions are well planned	469	3.88 (1.18)	441	3.58 (1.31)	.24	t(884) = 3.61, $p < .001$
Brigade training sessions are well organised	468	3.93 (1.18)	441	3.65 (1.23)	.23	t(893) = 3.47, $p = .001$
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well	469	4.59 (0.73)	440	4.41 (0.91)	.22	t(841) = 3.26, $p = .001$
Conflict between members is rare	469	4.34 (0.99)	442	4.10 (1.14)	.22	t(909) = 3.46, $p = .001$
Brigade Officers and members treat each other with respect	473	4.48 (0.90)	444	4.27 (1.01)	.22	t(915) = 3.33, $p = .001$
*My brigade gets along well with other agencies like Parks & SES	470	4.33 (0.91)	443	4.12 (0.97)	.22	t(911) = 3.42, $p = .001$
The brigade is well-disciplined	468	4.18 (0.92)	441	3.99 (1.04)	.19	t(907) = 2.90, $p = .004$

*Differences between those who had ever held a leadership position with those never holding one were also significant for those items marked with an asterisk.

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Table 71 Differences between high-ranking leaders and all others on ratings of brigade life

Item	1 st Officers and Above vs. Others
The brigade lets me know what's going on	U = 42439, $p < .001$
I am included in the group by all members of my brigade	U = 44728, $p < .001$
Brigade officers and members treat each other with respect	U = 46416, $p < .001$
Elections are fair open and honest	U = 42686, $p < .001$
Conflict between members is rare	U = 47675, $p = .003$
I'm given responsibilities that suit my skill and experience	U = 45474, $p < .001$
I feel safe when working with brigade members	U = 48463, $p < .001$
New members are welcomed and included in brigade activities	U = 48429, $p < .001$
I have opportunities to meet other brigades through TFS activities	U = 42670, $p < .001$
My brigade gets along well with other brigades	U = 44197, $p < .001$
My brigade gets along well with other agencies like Parks and SES	U = 45648, $p < .001$
All the members take part in decision making	U = 45076, $p < .001$
Brigade training sessions are well planned	U = 49652, $p = .045$
Brigade training sessions are well organised	U = 48588, $p = .017$
Brigade members from different backgrounds get along well	U = 50583, $p = .048$
There are no problems with factions in my brigade	U = 48463, $p = .014$

TFS Leadership Survey

Table 72 Differences between leader and non-leader ratings of leadership

Item	Currently Leaders			Not Currently Leaders			Cohen d	t-test
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
*The brigade officers are fair-minded	469	4.59	.74	441	4.25	1.05	.37	t(786) = 5.68, p < .001
*The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member	467	4.28	.97	441	3.88	1.19	.37	t(852) = 5.52, p < .001
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticizing	465	4.42	.87	441	4.06	1.13	.36	t(823) = 5.29, p < .001
*The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot resolve it themselves	466	4.14	1.09	436	3.75	1.14	.35	t(900) = 5.23, p < .001
*If a brigade member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers do so privately if practical	465	4.32	.95	440	3.96	1.14	.34	t(856) = 5.20, p < .001
The brigade officers are good communicators	471	4.31	.95	439	3.98	1.17	.31	t(908) = 4.76, p < .001
The brigade chief keeps in contact with District staff	469	4.59	.75	441	4.33	.90	.31	t(856) = 4.77, p < .001
*The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained	467	4.55	.77	442	4.31	.96	.28	t(844) = 4.25, p < .001
*Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief	463	4.03	1.19	435	3.68	1.17	.30	t(896) = 4.49, p < .001
The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed	470	4.62	.73	438	4.41	.85	.27	t(862) = 4.09, p < .001
The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed	472	4.49	.81	442	4.26	1.00	.25	t(849) = 3.80, p < .001
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another	471	4.39	1.06	439	4.10	1.23	.25	t(908) = 3.86, p < .001
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members	469	4.37	1.03	438	4.13	1.14	.22	t(905) = 3.41, p = .001
*The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for	471	4.34	.94	437	4.13	1.02	.21	t(906) = 3.25, p = .001
The brigade is not a 'one man band'	471	4.50	.94	440	4.29	1.11	.20	t(862) = 3.13, p = .002
The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable	469	4.51	.80	441	4.33	.97	.20	t(908) = 3.01, p = .003

**Differences between those who had ever held a leadership position with those never holding one were also significant for those items marked with an asterisk.*

TFS Leadership Survey

Table 73 Differences between high-ranking leaders' and others' ratings of leadership

Item	1 st Officers and Above vs. Others
Officer Items	
The brigade officers are fair minded	U = 42527, $p < .001$
The brigade officers give helpful feedback rather than blaming or criticising	U = 44746, $p < .001$
The brigade officers deal promptly with trouble caused by any member	U = 44545, $p < .001$
If a member needs to be corrected, the brigade officers to do so privately if practical	U = 42850, $p < .001$
The brigade officers are good communicators	U = 42789, $p < .001$
The brigade officers are skilled and knowledgeable	U = 46750, $p = .001$
The brigade officers make sure everything is well maintained	U = 49296, $p = .021$
The brigade officers make sure TFS procedures are followed	U = 49917, $p = .017$
The brigade officers make sure that safe working practices are followed	U = 49676, $p = .015$
Chief Items	
The brigade chief delegates tasks to officers and members	U = 44695, $p < .001$
The brigade chief does not favour one individual or group over another	U = 46533, $p < .001$
The brigade chief keeps in contact with district staff	U = 47578, $p = .001$
The brigade chief intervenes in any dispute between members when it looks as if they cannot solve it themselves	U = 45406, $p = .001$
The brigade chief makes sure that members do what they are responsible for	U = 50120, $p = .037$
The brigade is not a "one-man-band"	U = 51408, $p = .093$
Past brigade chiefs avoid commenting on the current chief	U = 49312, $p = .104$
A new brigade chief is elected after two or three terms	U = 52331, $p = .889$

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