



Title	Mr
First name	Steve
Last name	Thompson
I am making this submission as	Emergency services
Submission type	Personal
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	Senior deputy RFS captain
Consent to make submission public	Public
Your story	<p>I have been a volunteer member of the Lankeys Creek rural fire brigade for over 20 years</p> <p>Over the last two years I have become concerned with the lack of work health and safety for volunteers, the poor levels of training amongst volunteers plus the age, lack of fitness and poor health of many active volunteers</p> <p>During the fire it became obvious that on ground fire managers had significant conflicts of interest and this was reflected in the way they deployed resources</p>
1.1 Causes and contributing factors	
1.2 Preparation and planning	

1.3 Response to bushfires

On ground fire management is being conducted by local landholders (volunteers) who have clear conflicts of interest in that they are directly linked to some of the properties they are protecting and not others
The RFS has a conflict of interest policy for staff
I asked if it applies to volunteers and was told they were covered by reading a code of conduct

1.4 Any other matters

Active fire ground volunteers can be over 70, seriously over weight, have medical issues and be totally unfit but the RFS takes no responsibility for restricting them from being on the trucks
They only need to do basic training once which for older volunteers could have been 20 years ago
They don't need to have first aid training
They don't need to have done burn over training
There is no requirement or paper for volunteers to report dangerous incidents or near misses
There are no risk assessments, safe operating procedures or safe work method statements applied to volunteer activities
During the recent fires this situation was exacerbated by volunteers who have not been involved for many years or completely inexperienced jumping on the trucks

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