



# VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

Address: 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East, 3151  
 Email: [vfbv@vfbv.com.au](mailto:vfbv@vfbv.com.au)  
 Telephone: 9886 1141  
 Chief Executive Officer: Andrew Ford

Post: PO Box 453, Mt Waverley, 3149  
 Website: [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au)  
 Fax: 9886 1618  
 State President: Nev Jones AFSM



## HELP VFBV FUNDRAISING EFFORT

VFBV needs everyone to help spread the word about our current fund raising effort to help fund the current Supreme Court action. You can help VFBV by spreading the word amongst people you know, encourage them to donate and/or to also help spread the word.

You or your brigade could consider possible corporate donors or community organisations that might be interested in supporting our fund raising efforts via a local fund raising event, promotion of our message or donation.

Donors can make a direct deposit via the Bendigo Bank to the Valuing Volunteers Fund, BSB 633 000, Account number 157 728 221, or make a donation by visiting [www.mycause.com.au/cfa](http://www.mycause.com.au/cfa).

## WA PASSES FIREFIGHTERS' CANCER LAW

The Western Australian Parliament has just passed its Firefighters' Cancer Law for volunteers, adding to the momentum of presumptive legislation around the country and the pressure for legislation in Victoria.

Tell your MPs it is time for presumptive legislation in Victoria that lists the same 12 cancers named in other States, treats career and volunteer firefighters equally, and includes retrospective coverage for firefighters who have already been diagnosed.

Presumptive legislation works by reversing the onus of proof. The cancer is presumed to be work related provided it is one of 12 listed cancers and the firefighter has sufficient years of service.

The WA legislation was supported by the Liberal National Government, the Labor Opposition, Upper House Greens and independent MPs, however it does not

match the standard set by Queensland and South Australia, which treat career and volunteer firefighters equally.

Unlike their career colleagues, WA volunteers are expected to show they have attended at least five hazardous fires – structure and vehicle fires – each year for five years.

Victorian firefighters are still waiting for the legislation they were promised, and there are still unanswered questions.

Before the 2014 State Election, Labor announced that "Victorian legislation for career and volunteer firefighters will reflect the cancers covered and timeframes for duty of service as in the Tasmanian legislation" and explicitly contained no reference to unequal treatment or extra eligibility requirements for volunteers. However, the Government's letters to volunteers since the election

## FEDERAL LEGISLATION PROVIDES HOPE AND FAIR PROCESS

VFBV officials last week gave evidence to a Senate Inquiry which is part of the process to consider the proposed Federal Legislation, Fair Work Act Amendment (Respect for Emergency Services Volunteers) Bill 2016. The Amendment Bill is designed to prevent interference with the capacity of organisations such as CFA to manage, support, deploy, value or engage their volunteers.

Among 300 submissions to the Inquiry, two thirds were from volunteers, which shows the level of concern about the EBA's effects on the volunteer based CFA.

The draft Legislation is on the VFBV website and I am of a view that it is very good for volunteers and for CFA. Assuming it is passed by the Senate, it provides some clear principles for the future that will make it much clearer for everyone and give a constructive way forward that should avoid the mess and tension we have experienced in recent times.

The Commonwealth Department of Employment have explained to the Senate Committee that the changes being proposed to the Fair Work Act will make it unlawful for clauses in an EBA, such as the one CFA is negotiating

have hinted that it is considering imposing a requirement for an arbitrary number of turnouts before a volunteer becomes eligible for compensation.

Your local MPs need to know that volunteers are tired of waiting and will not accept being treated differently just because they are not paid.

By Andrew Ford, VFBV Chief Executive Officer

with the UFU, to interfere with an organisation's ability to manage its volunteers. They explained that the changes proposed to the Fair Work Act will not delay the Fair Work Commission's EBA approval process, will not delay EBA bargaining between an organisation and its employees and will not affect appropriately tailored EBA consultation arrangements between an employer and employees.

The UFU have opposed the legislation despite UFU Secretary Peter Marshall agreeing during the Senate Committee hearing that EBAs should not be allowed to include terms that limit the provision of support to volunteers, or limit the way an organisation manages its operations and deploys its volunteers. These are the core principles contained in the proposed Fair Work Act amendments.

It seems that most people either support the proposed Fair Work Act amendment, or agree with the principles proposed by the Fair Work Act amendment, and/or agree that the proposed CFA EBA either does not, or should not be allowed to include things that offend the principles outlined by the amendment.

The Fair Work Act amendment would also allow volunteers to make a submission to the Fair Work Commission to raise volunteer concerns; something the current legislation denies us. When volunteers recently raised concerns and asked for a fair say we were told that with the EBA in the Fair Work process, we had no place and no right to

be heard, even though the issues directly impact on volunteers.

VFBV reinforced to the Senate Committee that volunteers have no quarrel with the pay and allowances of our paid colleagues. We are just asking for a fair go for volunteers.

The Senate Committee has been provided with extensive material and detail to show how the CFA proposed EBA would negatively impact on the way CFA engages and deploys its volunteers; the provision of support and equipment to volunteers; the way CFA manages its operations in relation to volunteers; and CFA's ability to have regard to genuine and meaningful consultation with volunteers under the Volunteer Charter. The Senate Committee is due to report to Parliament on 10 October.

On a separate issue, the case in the Victorian Supreme Court continues although the trial date has been delayed again from the original September schedule. At the time of writing this, even the rescheduled trial dates set for early October will not proceed and hearings are scheduled to determine new dates. VFBV did not create this delay and we are disappointed with CFA's approach that has led to the delays. The trial date is now unclear and will be the subject of further decision in the first weeks of October. More advice will be posted to VFBV website as soon as possible.

In the meantime VFBV efforts to raise funds to support the Supreme Court case continue. As part of our fund raising effort VFBV has started a crowd funding campaign supported by the 'mycause' website. Please visit the site [www.mycase.com.au/cfa](http://www.mycase.com.au/cfa) or the VFBV website for information about how to make a donation.

I urge everyone reading this to help spread the word about the importance of people donating a small amount if they can afford to. Even if you can't make a donation you can also help our fund raising effort by posting the mycause 'Supporting and Valuing CFA volunteers' site link on your Facebook page or giving the



details to people you know. VFBV needs everyone to help spread the word and we need donations no matter how large or small from as many people as possible.

To those who have donated already or who are actively spreading the word, thank you for your support. To those who are yet to become active, I need your help please.

This is a crossroads for volunteers and the very nature of CFA, it has been left to VFBV to make a stand, and we are greatly encouraged by the huge number of messages of support we are receiving from volunteers and others in the community. Although I would rather we were not forced into this situation, I believe our campaign to protect the volunteer based and fully integrated CFA is in good shape. All involved in preparations, activities, raising awareness of our issues and raising funds are doing a great job, keep up the good work and thank you.

### FAREWELL AND RESPECT TO MFB CHIEF PETER RAU

In recent days MFB Chief Officer Peter Rau has resigned. Peter had spoken out publicly about his concerns with the proposed EBA impacts on his ability to perform his function as Chief Officer, and he joins the former Minister, CFA CEO, CFA Chief Officer and CFA Board who have had the courage to stand by their values and moral judgement.

I take this opportunity to thank Peter for his commitment over many years, his strength of leadership and work that he has done in such a difficult and critical role in recent times. I am sure volunteers across Victoria will join me in wishing Peter, also a long serving CFA member, all the best.

## HUGE THANKS AND RESPECT FOR OUTGOING CFA BOARD



## VFBV LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS CONTINUE

The 48 participants in this year's VFBV Volunteer Leadership Program are in the home stretch.

They have made their project presentations and will complete their tasks in December.

The groups working from Woodend and Dandenong include 48 volunteers from CFA, VICSES, Ambulance Victoria, St John Ambulance and Life Saving Victoria.

They are working towards Certificate IV in Leadership and Management (BSB42015) with practical projects in the areas of fatigue management, diversity, training, technology, and volunteer recruitment, retention and succession.

## BILL WATSON HONOURED

Our congratulations to former VFBV District 13 President Bill Watson AFSM (pictured right) on being awarded Life Membership of VFBV District 13 in recognition of his outstanding work for the welfare of CFA members and the community.

Bill is widely respected and regarded for his endless support to CFA volunteers and volunteerism.

Our sincere thanks to



Bill who will be missed in District 13. We look forward to your ongoing involvement in VFBV.

There was a standing ovation at the VFBV Annual General Meeting for former CFA Chair John Peberdy and former CFA Board Members Ross Coyle, Samantha Hunter, James Holyman, Michael Freshwater, John Schurink and Michael Tudball AFSM (pictured with State President Nev Jones AFSM and CEO Andrew Ford).

Also at the AGM: the meeting was informed that VFBV Board Members Nev Jones AFSM, Andy Cusack, Bill Maltby and Bruce Pickett were reappointed to the Board for a term of two years, from a field of nine applicants, and Graeme Jilbert and Gerry Neyenhuis were elected as the State Council delegates to the Board for 2016/17.

State Council welcomed two newly elected State Councilors, Ex Captain Graeme Goodrem (District 15) and Lieutenant Simon Hicks (District 24), and acknowledged the service of retiring State Councilors Jackie Crow (District 8), Graham Cocks (District 24) and Don Garlick (District 15).

## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS NEEDED

VFBV is inviting volunteers to work on VFBV/CFA Joint Committees in 2017 as Subject Matter Experts.

Applicants must be endorsed by their VFBV District Council, have relevant expertise, and a network of contacts to represent volunteers' views.

District Councils have the Expression of Interest form, and must have nominations back to VFBV by 31 October - current or former SMEs can reapply.

## VFBV multi agency youth network

Young members of the VFBV Multi-Agency Youth Network are already organising their first activities in four Districts, and 17 VFBV Districts, VICSES and the Red Cross are all recruiting.

With support from VFBV, young volunteers in District 11 are launching a multi-agency youth program in schools, District 13 is preparing a forum for young volunteers, District 14 is instigating social events where young volunteers can discuss ideas, and in Districts 8, 12, 15 and 16, young volunteers are already getting involved in their VFBV District Councils.

Volunteer champions are needed in Districts 4, 5, 6 and 22. Contact Chris Fryer on (03) 9886 1141 or at [c.fryer@vfbv.com.au](mailto:c.fryer@vfbv.com.au)

## THE LATEST NEWS

Get the latest in our email newsletter or VFBV's popular Two Minute Briefing from the VFBV/CFA Joint Committees. Register at [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au) - click on the VFBV Newsletter box.

Join the discussion on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/cfavol](http://www.facebook.com/cfavol); follow on Twitter [www.twitter.com/vfbv](http://www.twitter.com/vfbv) or Instagram [@volunteer\\_fire\\_brigades\\_vic](https://www.instagram.com/volunteer_fire_brigades_vic)