



# VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

## News Note

**UPDATE FOR MEMBERS – 5 September 2016**

### **SUPPORTING AND VALUING OUR CFA VOLUNTEERS CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN**

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria today launched a crowdfunding campaign to give the public the chance to support the work we are doing to protect, advocate and represent CFA volunteers, including our Supreme Court action.

The campaign '*Supporting and Valuing our CFA Volunteers*' is now live on Australian crowdfunding platform, *mycause*.

As you know, VFBV is fighting to maintain CFA as a volunteer based and fully integrated fire and emergency service with employees fully integrated with volunteers to provide seamless public safety services to Victorians. This is what CFA is under our CFA Act.

The community volunteer nature of CFA is under attack from the industrial deal done by the Andrews Victorian Government and Peter Marshall of the United Firefighters Union. The deal negatively impacts on CFA as a volunteer based and fully integrated organisation, its operations and support for volunteers including consultation.

It is an attempt to change the nature of CFA by using an anomaly in the Commonwealth Workplace Relations Act which enables an EBA to override state legislation once the EBA is registered by the Commonwealth Fair Work Commission.

The Supreme Court trial on the lawfulness of the new CFA Board adopting the proposed CFA/UFU Enterprise Bargaining Agreement will begin on 22 September 2016 and should run for up to five days.

The CFA/United Firefighters Union Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, approved by the new government-appointed CFA Board, would see:

- The powers of the Chief Officer overridden;
- The union given power of veto on issues affecting volunteer based and fully integrated organisation, operations and support;
- Restrictions in the EBA on effective volunteer consultation rights under the *CFA Volunteer Charter*;
- Other clauses that are contrary to the CFA Act, and
- Volunteers treated as second class just because they are not paid.

Only Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria is left to defend CFA from the deal and its detrimental effect for CFA services to the Victorian public. The Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett shared our volunteer concerns, refused to support the deal and resigned in June. The CFA Board that was opposing the deal was sacked by the Andrews Government. The CEO, Lucinda Nolan and Chief Officer, Joe Buffone subsequently resigned in protest over the deal. The current CFA Board and administration are failing to stand up for CFA volunteers and kow-towing to unlawful UFU demands.

The campaign, particularly through the courts, costs money. Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria does not intend to use government grant funds or individual brigade affiliation fees to pay for the campaign, so we are asking the community that we serve to support us. This funding will be used to pay for Supreme Court and other action to preserve and protect the powers of the CFA Act.

VFBV and volunteers have made it very clear that we are not against our paid colleagues and have no interest in interfering in their legitimate pay and conditions. Our vision is for CFA to be a modern and contemporary emergency service where volunteers and paid staff work side by side as equals and respect one another.

Encouraging, maintaining and strengthening the capacity of volunteers is vitally important for Victoria, and we are calling on those who value the capacity, determination and service of the volunteers to please support our campaign in the Supreme Court on September 22 by donating to our campaign on *mycause*.

Members of the public can learn more and make a donation online by visiting <https://www.mycause.com.au/cfa>

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## What you can do

Our goal is to raise \$500,000 so all volunteers are encouraged to:

- Proactively share the website and encourage the community to support and value the CFA volunteers who protect them, by donating to our cause
- Contact local service clubs and businesses seeking donations from your local community.
- Enlist local community members to share our website and appeal to their networks
- Send media releases and letters to the editor to local media seeking community help and ask local media if they will support the campaign