

## SUBMISSION OF TROY CLEVERLEY

1. I, Troy Cleverley, Leading Firefighter (**LFF**), with the County Fire Authority (**CFA**), [REDACTED] in the State of Victoria, say as follows:
2. I have been employed by the CFA for 14 and a half years. I currently hold the rank of Leading Firefighter and I have held that rank for 9 years.
3. As well as holding the rank of Leading Firefighter I hold the following qualifications/memberships:
  - i. Aerial pumper
  - ii. Heavy pumper
  - iii. Tanker
  - iv. Protective Equipment (PE) Van
  - v. High Angle Rescue
  - vi. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Category 1
  - vii. LPG Emergency Response
  - viii. Ground Observer Team Leader
  - ix. Strike Team Leader
  - x. Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) Practitioner
  - xi. Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment
  - xii. Certificate III in Firefighting Operations
  - xiii. Certificate IV in Firefighting Operations
4. I received a CFA 10 year Service Medal in 2011 and was presented with the National Emergency Medal in 2013 by the then Premier of Victoria Denis Napthine for my service during the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

### **Morale at Work**

5. I feel that the morale at work has decreased during the Napthine Government (2010 – 2014). This has been the result of members feeling disheartened and demoralised by the Coalition Governments litigious attacks on the fire service and attempts to destroy the EBA terms and conditions.
6. I feel that the morale at work also decreased because of the MFB's attempt to set aside in its entirety the UFU/MFB Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. It was accepted and understood that had the MFB been successful in their attempts to set aside the EBA, the CFA would very quickly follow suit and seek to achieve the same outcome in relation to the CFA EBA.
7. As a result of CFA's workplace attacks and its failure to honour agreements, a distinct lack of trust and feelings of uncertainty have prevailed among operational staff. The CFA, and in particular senior management, have proven that they cannot be trusted. They have treated their staff as nothing but a necessary evil and attempted to demonise and undermine us in the eyes of volunteers and the public in general. As a result staff are left feeling unvalued and unappreciated.

## **Equipment and Staffing**

8. The standard of equipment and operational response (including staffing) has decreased during the Napthine Government. At Warrnambool specifically, the aerial pumper is still not online and still not staffed. This expensive purchase which is now over three years old has not seen a day of service protecting Warrnambool and its surrounding communities. The pod truck which is supposed to carry high angle, confined space, and trench rescue equipment is also not on line and trench rescue gear is now stowed on a trailer in direct contravention of Worksafe PIN. This means expensive power tools are unsecured and exposed to the weather, not all the equipment or shoring can be carried due to weight restrictions, and we cannot respond to a trench rescue incident code 1 (under emergency conditions) as Chief Officers Standard Operating Procedure 12.04 clearly states that no CFA vehicle shall travel under code 1 response while towing a trailer.
9. Current staffing levels are inadequate to protect the Victorian Community and ensure firefighter safety. Warrnambool only has a minimum staffing of three firefighters per shift. Chief Officers Standing Order 11 (Health and Safety) states that the preferred minimum number of firefighters on the fireground is 4. Volunteer responses are dropping off to the point that it is not uncommon to have no volunteers respond at all, particularly to protected premises alarms that have a significant life risk such as the Warrnambool Base Hospital. Portland Brigade has only has 1 LFF on day shift, Mon to Fri and has MAJOR risk and hazard facilities in the Brigade area including the ALCOA aluminium smelter and the Port of Portland.

## **Interoperability**

10. A lack of smooth and efficient interoperability between the CFA and MFB has recently been made clear to me through the CFA/MFB secondment program. I have been fortunate enough to work with a MFB Station Officer who has been seconded to Warrnambool but it has not been a smooth or easy transition for the SO in question. MFB methods, procedures and expectations differ to those of the CFA to varying degrees and it is only the resourcefulness, experience and adaptability of the MFB SO (and the patience and positivity of the CFA members on the shift) that have seen the program work successfully. I would like to see increased interoperability between the agencies by making it easier for MFB staff to fill CFA vacancies and vice versa. This would however require a much greater standardisation of training and assessment methods, equipment and procedures, and Standing Orders and Standard Operating Procedures.

## **Senior Management**

11. There has been an evident disconnect between Senior Management in the fire services and their employees because the CFA does not adequately communicate with its operational staff.

12. Management do not understand, or seem to care, about specific fire station issues. These include staffing (or more accurately, a lack thereof) and commissioning of the Warrnambool aerial pumper and pod truck as mentioned earlier.

13. I have lost complete trust and confidence in senior management as they have tried to destroy our employment conditions. Senior Management show no concern for the welfare of operational staff and are only interested in their own image and conditions. I believe there is no way to repair the relationship because the issues are systemic and ingrained. You cannot force one's behaviours, beliefs and attitudes to change. They have created an us versus them mentality.



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Troy Cleverly

Date: 4 August 2015