

SUBMISSION OF PAULA TREACY

1. I, Paula Treacy, Leading Firefighter (**LFF**) with the Country Fire Authority (**CFA**), [REDACTED], in the State of Victoria, say as follows:
2. I have been employed by the CFA for 12 years 1 month. I currently hold the rank of LFF and I have held that rank for 9 years.
3. As well as holding the rank of LFF I hold the following qualifications/memberships:
 - i. Bachelor of Applied Science
 - ii. Certificate IV Training Assessment
 - iii. Certificate IV in Fire Technology
 - iv. Ground Observer Qualified
 - v. Juvenile Fire Awareness Intervention Program Practitioner
 - vi. UFU Membership
 - vii. Secretary of the Vic Fire Hockey Club
4. I have also received a 10 year Service Award and National Emergency Medal Black Saturday Bushfires.

Morale at Work

5. I feel that the morale at work has decreased during the Napthine Government (2010-2014) for varying reasons.
6. The constant fighting against management and government for what was industrially agreed resulted in ongoing frustration. It seems unreasonable to continually fight for what we were promised. Should the MFB had been successful in their attempt to set aside the EBA, the CFA would have followed suit. Also, the EMR "trial" is still not fully underway after years of delay. This is the direct result of the government cut-backs to the CFA and MFB.
7. I feel that the morale at work has also decreased because the CFA is failing to honour its agreements. Firefighters are becoming more cynical and are convinced by continual actions, that management fail to consider what is truly important for the firefighters and the fire service. It means that personnel will be wary of any agreed future industrial arrangements and have a feeling that management might renege on them based on a whim. As mentioned, I am personally undeniably upset and frustrated that my union representatives need to fight for something that industrially has already been agreed upon. For a workforce naming 'integrity' as one of its core values, it fails to implement it in its conduct with operational staff.

Equipment and Staffing

8. The standard of equipment and operational response (including staffing) has decreased during the Napthine Government. This is evident in the way that progress forward wasn't achieved in increasing minimum crewing, getting consistency in fire appliances (on station and spares) and equipment was delayed because of

inadequate budget. The CFA personnel are used to 'making do' with old and faulty equipment, trucks, and radios, that after a while it becomes the norm. This shouldn't be the case. The Fire Services should strive for the best equipment for the job, not what is the cheapest.

9. Staffing levels are also currently inadequate to protect the Victorian Community and firefighters. I personally work at a station with minimum crewing of 3. How can that be a safe level of manning to make an immediate internal attack on a house fire where persons are reported inside, when there needs to be a basic minimum of four personnel (2 personnel in Breathing Apparatus, 1 person operating the pump, and 1 person controlling the incident). Further, four firefighters is also not enough as it means we do not have firefighters outside in BA ready to provide assistance should the firefighter inside find themselves in duress. Relying on volunteers to turn up, in a timely manner, for such time critical tasks, is a folly. Sometimes this will occur and sometimes it won't. It simply can't be relied on 100% of the time. This then leaves the professional firefighters with a moral choice of what to do, which may compromise their safety.

Interoperability

10. I have experienced issues arising from the lack of interoperability between the CFA and MFB. As a recent recruit instructor at VEMTC Craigieburn, I witnessed firsthand the lack of interoperability IT-wise between the services. A temporary fix was achieved while I was there, but I hope that it continues to develop and become seamless (I have been led to believe that this will be the case), because only then, will it stop having an effect on the efficiency and morale of any CFA personnel working there. Breathing Apparatus filling was one issue alone that there is little interoperability between the services, leaving the CFA to make do with mobile BA filling appliances at VEMTC when many CFA BA sets were being used.
11. Increased interoperability could occur by continuing the secondment program, forge ahead and actually get people on the ground working on plans for a true joint recruit course and providing us with the same gear, the same trucks and the same equipment.

Senior Management

12. There is a disconnect between Senior Management in the fire services and their employees as a result of the fact that they are unseen and unheard. It would be beneficial for senior management to be seen outside Headquarters from time to time. This would allow shop floor employees to direct questions they have directly to the people making the decisions, and not have emails asking these questions go unanswered. This would also allow senior management to realise how passionate firefighters are about their careers.
13. I believe that as a result of the matters mentioned, I have lost trust and confidence in senior management. Trust is required to work both ways, and I am unable to trust management who have consistently failed to deliver promises in the industrial

agreements that they have signed. Despite my contempt in relation to the matters mentioned, I do believe that relationship can be repaired by honest communication and allowing time for change. These qualities need to be displayed consistently over a considerable period of time by those in the power seat.



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Paula Treacy

Date: 4 August 2015