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CFA management to be stripped of corporate credit cards

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Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett has given the CFA until February 28 to get rid of 790 credit cards.

Source: Supplied

CFA MANAGEMENT will be stripped of their corporate credit cards after senior officers spent more than \$130,000 on expenses in 14 months.

Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett has given the CFA until February 28 to get rid of 790 credit cards and three months to find a better way to manage staff spending.

"There are approximately 800 CFA credit cards in circulation, that means around two-thirds of CFA staff have a card," Ms Garrett said.

"We cannot understand why so many cards were issued, the sheer volume is bewildering. Credit card spending creeps and this system is not good enough."

More than \$36,000 was charged to credit cards for accommodation and \$23,645 for parking, according to a list of purchases made from February 2013 to April 2014.

The list of transactions was only released after Ms Garrett became minister, after she had battled with the CFA to release the documents through Freedom of Information while in opposition.

Some of the purchases included \$18,111 on meals, \$15,832 on conferences, \$7349 on travel and \$806 on car washes.

A CFA staff member spent \$111 to take two visiting French firefighters to the Eureka Skydeck and two members spent \$160 having pants altered.

Four dinners were charged to the cards, priced at \$338, \$340, \$201 and \$141 during the mine fire at Hazelwood last year. "This is taxpayers money being spent and we want to ensure that we have a system that is beyond question," Ms Garrett said. "All spending must be accountable."

The Herald Sun last year revealed CFA managers spent \$230,000 on a taxpayer-funded splurge at racecourses, top restaurants and plush hotels.

An independent investigation was launched after the credit card receipts from December 2010 to February 2013 were released under FOI.

CFA management reined in spending on fancy restaurants since the investigation was announced, but still spent more money each month.

Taxpayers were charged an average of \$9300 per month on CFA credit cards from February 2013 to April 2014.

In the two years prior CFA staff spent \$8800 per month, on average.

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