



Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations

Report for CFSVA AGM 8th October 2016

The last few months have been dominated by the UFU demands through the Enterprise bargaining process in Victoria, and I really have to wonder where the leadership of this country is at, when a Premier continues to advocate for a sign off on an agreement, that his emergency services minister, the Chief executive officer of the CFA, the Chief Officer of the CFA all resign due to the proposed EBA being unworkable. Add to this a board who accepted sacking rather than accept the problems associated with implementing the EBA and now the MFB Chief Officer has also resigned as the pressure was put on him to sign a similar agreement. The very people I would think that the premier and cabinet should be taking advice from are being cast aside in favour of what they perceive will be political support for the future or payback for what was done at election time.

I have been in contact with Andrew Ford throughout the last few months to support where we can, as the VFBV have fought to maintain a service that respects and supports it's volunteers who give tirelessly of their time to provide an adequate and efficient service to their communities. With the assistance of Garth we have sent letters to the Prime Minister, The Opposition leader, The Premier of Victoria, and Nick Xenophon. We received some responses and at times suited for political purposes, but never received an acknowledgement from the Victorian Premier. I spent a weekend in Victoria before the Federal election and attended a rally in the Dandenong Ranges with Michaela Cash and attended the VFBV council meeting on the Sunday.

As promised the before the election, the Federal government are attempting to change the Fair Work Act so an EBA can't impact on volunteer based emergency service at a state level. The legislation changes are currently being looked at by a senate committee and we are hopeful they will pass into legislation shortly.

Andrew Ford and his team at the VFBV have done an incredible job in raising the awareness of this issue through the media, and other networks, so that CFA volunteers and the community are kept informed. Having read the proposed EBA, it is critical that a number of the proposed inclusions are either removed or significantly diluted or volunteers in Victoria are going to be left the very poor relations in Victoria.

It is interesting to note that the Western Australian Government has agreed to make some changes to their legislation that will separate rural volunteers form the paid service with a structure of their own, taking up the recommendations of the Ferguson report.

Brian McKinley (Past CAVFA Chairman) and I met with the PSIRC in September 2015 and were told that there would be a significant review of the committee.

We have had a letter recently from the PSIRC committee (7th July 2016) as it is now referred to stating there had only been one meeting to that date with another scheduled for late July. There is a couple of areas where CAVFA may be able to participate.

We should be invited to be part of the review of the Public Safety Training package which will include the use of Technical Advisory Committees. (CAVFA should be invited to sit on this committee)

Department of Education and Training along with the Australian Industry Skills committee will be undertaking a review of all IRC memberships and CAVFA should be part of the dialogue there.

Ken Middleton (RFSANSW), Ian Harding (ACT) and I attended the National Memorial service in Canberra and laid a wreath for our fallen, and I tried to arrange meetings with the PM who unfortunately was in Tasmania that day for a Memorial at Port Arthur.

We reviewed the CAVFA constitution at the AGM in Brisbane with several minor changes made to tidy up a few loose ends.

Roger Flavell
Chairman