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Volunteer firefighters resume injunction bid

Tuesday, August 16, 2016, 5:14pm

Victoria's volunteer firefighters will tomorrow revive their bid to block the Country Fire Authority from seeking approval for its new enterprise agreement.

After filing an updated statement of claim last week, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria will apply for an injunction preventing the [CFA](#) taking the agreement any further.

A VFBV spokesperson said today it aims to eventually obtain a permanent injunction against proceeding with the agreement on the basis that it contains unlawful terms.

The new [CFA](#) board signed off on the agreement last on Friday and wants to put it to a vote of about 800 employee firefighters, before seeking approval from the Fair Work Commission.

However, the Turnbull Government has pledged to change the Fair Work Act, to protect the role of more than 55,000 volunteer firefighters.

Changes to Fair Work Act retrospective: Cash

Employment Minister Michaelia Cash last week told the VFBV she would prevent enterprise agreements being used to compromise the operations of volunteer-based emergency services bodies, or to override the state laws.

"The amendment to the Fair Work Act will be introduced to Parliament as a matter of urgency following the resumption of the Parliament on 30 August," Senator Cash said in an August 13 [letter](#).

"The amendment will render ineffective any such terms in the proposed agreement, regardless of whether the agreement comes into effect before or after the amendment is passed."

Minister Cash said she would intervene in any application to the FWC to approve the agreement, by arguing it contained unlawful or discriminatory terms.

"I will also use my powers as Minister to intervene in any appropriate legal challenge to the agreement in the Federal Court, in the event of such a challenge."

Victorian Parliament hears bullying claims against UFU secretary

The Andrews Government sacked the former [CFA](#) board over its refusal to agree to a new enterprise agreement with the United Firefighters Union.

The Minister for Emergency Services, Jane Garrett, the [CFA](#)'s chief executive and its chief fire officer resigned over concerns that the new agreement would encroach on management decision-making and the role of volunteers.

Tensions flared again this week, with Victoria Police arresting a woman for allegedly assaulting Garrett as she walked through inner-city Carlton.

In the Victorian Parliament, the Liberal Opposition used parliamentary privilege to query why Premier Daniel Andrews had not taken action over allegations that UFU Victorian secretary Peter Marshall had threatened Garrett during the bargaining deadlock.

Opposition Leader Matthew Guy told parliament that Marshall had "threatened to put an axe into Jane Garrett's head" and sent her text messages that another Labor MP said "crossed the line".

Guy argued the Premier had not only tolerated Marshall's behaviour, but rewarded it. "Why have you given him every single demand he's wanted?"

In reply, Premier Andrews said the Opposition Leader had raised "numerous falsehoods" and the final agreement approved by the [CFA](#) board contained additional protections for volunteers.

Outside Parliament today, a spokesperson for Marshall said the union leader "strongly denies" abusing Garrett in person and to sending the alleged text messages.



Jane Garrett
@Jane_GarrettMP

Thanks so very much to everyone who has reached out to me and my family during this ordeal. Your support means a lot to us.

9:48 AM - Aug 16, 2016

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