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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **CFA Volunteers' Campaign Shifts Federal**

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria's (VFBV's) legal campaign to protect Country Fire Authority and its volunteers from the effects of the proposed Andrews Government-United Firefighters Union industrial agreement is moving from the State Supreme Court jurisdiction to the Federal jurisdiction.

The move follows reforms to Commonwealth workplace laws by the Turnbull Government arising from discussions with VFBV and our national organisation CAVFA, aimed at outlawing clauses in enterprise bargain agreements which work against emergency service volunteers.

"From 13 October, federally registered enterprise agreements struck between organisations like the CFA and unions will not be allowed to include what is known as 'objectionable emergency management terms', that is, clauses which amongst other things are likely to have the effect of restricting or limiting the role, operations and support of emergency service volunteers," Mr Andrew Ford, CEO of VFBV, said this morning.

**"The heavy lifting to protect CFA volunteers from the negative impacts of the UFU enterprise agreement has now transferred to the Commonwealth Fair Work Commission and the Federal court system and that's where we will now concentrate our efforts.**

"One of the good things under the new industrial arrangements for CFA paid staff members is that their pay and allowance increases and other personal benefits that are proper industrial relations matters can be ticked off even as any provisions affecting volunteers are struck down. "

"It has always been our position that the CFA should have at least made administrative arrangements to pass on the pay increases for paid staff while we were dealing with the anti-volunteers issues. Unfortunately, the UFU and CFA ignored this approach.

**"After careful consideration of our legal advice we have been wrapping up our state Supreme Court action and this morning we bring it to a close.**

**"It served its purpose well. If the Federal industrial law reforms providing protection for CFA volunteers had not gone through, our Supreme Court case would have continued so as to secure basically the same protections.**

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“The Victorian Deputy Premier and Minister for Emergency Services, James Merlino, has made clear that there will be no change to the current proposed UFU agreement, and consistent with that position, comments in court by CFA’s barrister reflect the same course of action despite the changes to Commonwealth industrial law.

“That seems a silly thing to us because we are clear that many clauses do not meet the new legal standards. Therefore, it seems we will have to actively pursue the matter in the Fair Work Commission and, if necessary, through the Federal court system.

“However, it is our hope that both the CFA and the Andrews Government abide by the new Federal industrial laws so that we CFA volunteers who make up 97% of the CFA workforce can concentrate with our paid CFA colleagues on the task of delivering public safety services across Victoria.

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For all inquiries ring Garth Head at the VFBV office on 9802 0501 or 0408-553306.

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