

Media Release

MICHAEL O'BRIEN MP PETER WALSH MP

Leader of the Opposition
Leader of the Liberal Party
Shadow Minister for Small Business
State Member for Malvern

Leader of the Nationals
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Regional Victoria and Decentralisation
Shadow Minister for Agriculture
Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Shadow Minister for Bushfire Recovery
State Member for Murray Plains

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Liberal Nationals to rebuild and restore Victoria's iconic CFA

A Michael O'Brien-led Liberal Nationals government will rebuild and restore the Country Fire Authority (CFA) which has been gutted by the Andrews Labor Government.

The CFA has a long and proud history protecting Victorian lives and property, but has been gutted by a union-led takeover, with hundreds of CFA staff being stripped out and volunteers being sidelined.

Within the first 100 days of being elected, a Michael O'Brien-led Liberal Nationals government will introduce legislation to restore the CFA's power to select, recruit and manage its own staff and wear the CFA uniform. Legislation will enhance the CFA's powers and responsibilities for the ongoing delivery of fire services in current CFA areas.

A Liberal Nationals government will consult with Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) and CFA brigades across Victoria to identify the essential powers, people and resources that are needed to rebuild and restore the CFA.

The commitment would reform the Country Fire Authority Act to require that all members of the CFA Board must sign up to, and be bound by, the Volunteer Charter.

It would also mean the appointment of an independent Commissioner for Emergency Services Volunteers, within Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), with the power to investigate issues raised by volunteers, make recommendations on policies and practices, plus general dispute handling and arbitration powers.

The 2018/19 CFA Annual Report showed that 206 operational volunteers resigned that year and Victoria had lost 3,955 operational volunteers since Daniel Andrews started his war on CFA volunteers in 2014.

While the Andrews Labor Government focuses on dodgy deals with unions and the Chinese Communist Party, a Michael O'Brien-led Liberal Nationals government will get on with restoring the CFA and protecting its volunteers so that they can protect the lives and property of millions of Victorians.

Comments attributable to Leader of the Opposition, Michael O'Brien:

"Only the Liberal Nationals will guarantee that the CFA will be rebuilt and run as an independent fire authority that respects volunteers.

Liberal Nationals

"The Andrews Labor Government has sided with its union mates and driven the boot into hardworking Victorian CFA volunteers who have been forced out of the service.

"By rebuilding and restoring the CFA, we will give thousands of Victorian volunteers the respect that their service has been denied by this Andrews Labor government."

Comments attributable to Leader of the Nationals, Peter Walsh:

"The CFA is an iconic and trusted part of rural and regional Victoria and restoring this service is a priority of the Liberal Nationals.

"As part of a union-led takeover, hundreds of CFA staff have been stripped out and volunteers are sidelined.

"It's time to give the CFA back to Victorian communities and put the recent dark past of Andrews and his anti-CFA union cronies behind us."

Comments attributable to Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Nick Wakeling:

"CFA volunteers have risked their lives protecting their communities for over 75 years, but have been pushed out by a militant union and a Premier who doesn't have their back.

"Labor is content to push out hard-working CFA volunteers and see decades of experience walk out the door.

"The Liberal Nationals know that Victorian communities want the CFA reinstated and only we will deliver that piece of mind not only to those who rely on them, but the thousands of volunteers who put their lives on the line each day."

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