

February 10, 2017

CFA war takes its toll

MEMBER for Benambra Bill Tilley MLA says numbers released this week are just the tip of the iceberg in the fallout from the prolonged CFA dispute.

The Productivity Commission's [Report on Government Services](#) revealed that the number of CFA volunteers in Victoria has dropped significantly under Daniel Andrews.

The report shows that since Mr Andrews and the UFU began waging war on the CFA, the number of operational volunteer firefighters has plunged 6.9 per cent from 38,048 in June 2014 to 35,585 in June last year.

"Victoria now has 2400 fewer CFA volunteers compared to the time immediately before this Labor government came to power," Mr Tilley said.

"That in itself is damaging enough but the action of this government is largely seen as a betrayal of the brave volunteers that not only protect Benambra but the entire state of Victoria.

"Those actions have slashed the morale of the more than 60 brigades across this electorate and frayed the relationship between volunteers and paid firefighters.

"It saw the CFA board that included Wodonga West brigade captain Ross Coyle summarily sacked – they weren't alone, the dispute has also cost the jobs of the minister, chief firefighter and chief executive."

Mr Tilley said the CFA had a proud history of protecting Victoria.

"The bloody-mindedness of Daniel Andrews actions gutted the CFA of knowledge, expertise and morale," he said.

"We knew these things anecdotally – this report confirms our worst fears, that these actions have also cost our frontline firefighting resources almost 2500 volunteers.

"A future without CFA volunteer firefighters is one Victoria cannot afford."

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Brad Battin said it was a disgrace.

"Time and time again, Daniel Andrews picks sides and declares winners and losers and as a result Victoria is less safe."