



SIGNAL SEVEN

14 June 2018

Federal Industrial Laws Single Out Firefighters.

You may have noticed a growing campaign by unions across Australia. The “Change the Rules” campaign is aimed at securing fundamental change to Australia’s workplace laws.

For firefighters this represents an opportunity to address some fundamental flaws in laws concerning enterprise bargaining. In 2016 the Turnbull government made great fanfare about how CFA volunteers were supposedly being adversely affected by the UFU. We were branded a “militant left wing union” by Turnbull, and vilified by conservative press across the country.

In Canberra, you might have missed this as we are fortunate to not have any Murdoch owned press like the Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph or The Australian.

It was difficult to miss in Melbourne, where in the space of one month alone there were 30 front page stories attacking the UFU.

This all occurred while a Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry was putting the CFA under the spotlight over its appalling record in exposing firefighters to carcinogens at its Fiskville training facility. Ultimately the Parliamentary Inquiry released damning findings against the CFA, which this week are resonating around Canberra as reports emerge of contaminated firestations.

Such was the ferocity of the CFA / Liberal Party / Murdoch Press counter attack that:

- A “save the CFA website” was established, which harvested contact details for a Liberal Party fundraising campaign;
- The Herald Sun gave away tens of thousands of “Hands off the CFA” stickers;
- Volunteer brigades, including in the ACT, were ushered to meetings with Turnbull, Michaela Cash and others in the cabinet (see picture);
- False accusations were made in the media including against the UFU Act Branch (visit <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2016/s4542260.htm> to listen to ABC radio story).

A separate Signal 7 will deal with the PFAS issue soon.



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Victorian MPs and Senators pose for photos with volunteer firefighters in Canberra on Monday. Photo: Alex Ellinghausen

Fairfax Media Photo of Gungahlin RFS Tanker supporting anti union changes to the Fair Work Act, Parliament House courtyard, October 2016.

The end result was the passage of the Fair Work Amendment (Respect for Emergency Services Volunteers) Bill 2016. This made unprecedented changes to the Fair Work Act including:

- Limitations on what can be included in an enterprise agreement that applies to an organisation that has volunteers (like the ESA, RFS or ACT Fire and Rescue)
- Allowing volunteer bodies to make submissions to the Fair Work Commission so that they can have a say over what is in the enterprise agreement covering paid staff.

In summary, the UFU has been singled out for radical changes to the Fair Work Act.

UFU MEMBERS ARE URGED TO SUPPORT A RALLY AIMED AT CHANGING THE RULES.

**Details: 19 June, Midday to 1 pm, Parliament House Lawn
Muster by 11.30 hrs sharp at Rose Garden, next to Old Parliament House**

Reply: A Text message will be sent to all UFU members asking for a reply

Senior staff of Chief Minister's department have confirmed that the ACT Government will support attendance at the Change the Rules rally on 19 June 2018., We understand that today an email will be sent out confirmation that public service employees would be allowed to attend rallies, so long as they advised their supervisor and the attendance did not significantly disrupt service delivery.

Authorised by Greg McConville, Secretary, UFU, A.C.T. Branch.

**This is an official Union document to be shared between members only
Read out at muster and pin on notice boards.**