



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Fiskville special report on production of documents by CFA

The Victorian Parliament's Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee has presented a further report to Parliament on the Fiskville inquiry.

The special report, tabled in the Victorian Parliament today, concerns the production of documents by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to the Committee.

"The Committee has been forced to table this report due to documents not being produced under the terms of a summons relating to CFA Board papers," said Committee Chair Bronwyn Halfpenny.

In her foreword to the report, Ms Halfpenny pays tribute to the work of the men and women who make up the CFA and their important role in protecting the community from fire, emergencies and disaster.

"For these reasons it is disheartening for this Committee to have to table this special report. Decision makers within the CFA have done a disservice to the CFA legacy and CFA firefighters twice over. First the tragedy of Fiskville itself and now the refusal to provide vital information to this inquiry," Ms Halfpenny said.

"The Committee has made extensive efforts to undertake this inquiry in a cooperative manner and to be reasonable in its requests for documents that can help us find out what occurred at Fiskville," she said.

Since issuing the summons over 2 months ago, the Committee has been provided with minutes of 100 out of a total of 739 CFA Board meetings – that is, 13.5 per cent.

The Committee has written to the CFA on several occasions seeking disclosure of documents and is not satisfied with the responses received, prompting this report to Parliament.

"These documents and information go to the very heart of the terms of reference the Committee is required by Parliament to investigate," Ms Halfpenny said.

"So far the Committee has received more than 450 submissions and conducted several public hearings with career and volunteer firefighters, agencies and industry experts. This process underpinned the interim report and the Committee's recommendations, which were tabled in the Parliament in June this year."

The timeframe for the tabling of the Fiskville inquiry's final report was extended earlier this year to 31 March 2016, given the extensive documentation received by the Committee and the need to hear from a wide range of agencies and experts, including the CFA.

Ms Halfpenny noted that access to information was raised as a concern in the interim report presented by the Committee in June.

"Our concerns about not accessing the requested CFA Board papers are significant enough to warrant this special report to the Victorian Parliament. We want to undertake a thorough and transparent inquiry, and to complete this inquiry in a timely way we need access to this information."

The special report is available from the Committee's [website](#).

FOR MEDIA

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