



## IN BRIEF



### EB 2009

"The Victorian Fire Services managements' refusal to sign the heads-of-agreement had the state government's finger prints all over it," says Peter Marshall. "CFA and MFB managements are trying to deny firefighters a fair wage increase."



### Panel cut try

CFA management's attempt to abolish the Disputes Panel is a cynical move. This year, the panel delivered a huge increase in the number of career fire fighters for stations across Victoria and a minimum crewing level of four career fire fighters.



### The slate

CFA firefighter collective agreements up for renegotiation this year include the:

- CFA Operational Staff Agreement,
- CFA Operations Officers/ Operations Managers Agreement, and
- CFA Mechanical Maintenance and Tower Overseer Agreement.

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In May, CFA management walked away from a fair base wage increase for firefighters  
 pic: chris maxwell

# Conditions targeted

The Victorian government and employers take aim at firefighters' wages, conditions and entitlements

The state government and fire services management are attempting to strip hard-won workplace entitlements from Victorian firefighter industrial agreements.

"This is the mark of a desperate government," says Peter Marshall, UFU Victorian Branch secretary. "It's also evidence of management trying to avoid attention being focused on their incompetence, mismanagement and wasteful practices."

Back in May, the Brumby Government's cut its base increase for public sector workers from 3.25% to 2.25%. Victorian firefighters and the UFU were keen to secure the higher figure in

agreements due for renegotiation across 2009.

"With the bushfire effort and the accolades heaped on firefighters from both the MFB and CFA, Members expected management to do the right thing and sign a heads-of-agreement to lock the higher minimum into the new EB negotiation," says Peter Marshall. "Unfortunately, they refused, made unreasonable demands and the deadline came and went. We are now faced with a reduced minimum quantum. However, this will not deter the UFU from campaigning vigorously and bargaining in good faith to secure a result that will be fair for firefighters and ensure safety for all Victorians."

## CFA TRIES ENTITLEMENTS GRAB

Before even considering the Victorian public sector 3.25% basic increase, CFA management demanded major cuts to firefighter entitlements. "They said firefighters must give up their right to determine protective equipment," says Peter Marshall. "They also wanted the Disputes Panel abolished."

Other cuts demanded by the CFA included firefighter rights over amenities, station

design and sick leave without a medical certificate. "They also wanted to do away with the need to get firefighter agreement on such workplace issues, as EMR, OHS, staffing levels, lateral entry, secondment, career paths, training and instructors — and get firefighters to do more work for no more pay," says Peter. "There was no way the Union would agree to these over-the-top demands."