IN THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION

4 yearly review of modem awards – Fire Fighting Industry Award 2010

s.156 Fair Work Act

AM2014/202

WITNESS STATEMENT OF CRAIG WILLIAM LAPSLEY

1. CRAIG WILLIAM LAPSLEY, of 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 in the State of Victoria say as follows:

1  I am the Emergency Management Commissioner for the State of Victoria.

2  I make this statement from my own knowledge except where otherwise indicated. Where I make statements based on information provided by others, I believe such information to be true.

My background

3  I was appointed Victoria’s Emergency Management Commissioner and commenced in that role July 1, 2014.

4  I have overall responsibility for coordination before, during and after major emergencies including management of consequences of an emergency. I am appointed pursuant to the Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic).

5  I was appointed as Victoria’s first and only Fire Services Commissioner in 2010 after 30 years in Australian emergency management, mostly with the Country Fire Authority (CFA), including service as a volunteer fire fighter.

6  I finished my employment with the CFA in August 2007, ranked as Deputy Chief Officer.

7  In 2007, I was appointed Director Emergency Management – Health and Human Services and was responsible for the health sector emergency response to major incidents including mass casualty, pre-hospital (ambulance) and hospital surge.
capability. This extended to the state coordination and management of recovery arrangements for all emergencies, including recovery efforts after the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

8 I was seconded to Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) in 2005 to transform SES from a government department to a newly formed statutory authority.

9 In 1996, I was seconded to the New South Wales Fire Brigade in the position of Manager, State Operations for two years.

10 I am Chief Patron of the Road Rescue Association Victoria and I am on the National Emergency Services Advisory Committee of the Australian Red Cross.

11 I am a director of the Victorian Emergency Services Foundation and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre.

12 I am a patron of the Search and Rescue Dog Association, the Bendigo Football Netball League and the Central Victorian Fire Preservation Society.

Firefighting Modern Award

13 The Firefighting Modern Award 2010 (the Award) provides the minimum wages and conditions for Victorian firefighters. Presently it contains a distinction as to whether an employee can be employed on a part-time basis or not, dependent on whether the employer is a private sector or public sector employer.

14 I understand that in this application the CFA and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) are supportive of an amendment to the Award to remove this distinction. The effect would be that the safety net conditions in the Award would permit public sector employers in Australia to employ persons on a part-time basis.

15 The emergency management sector in Victoria has a strong reform agenda which includes embracing diversity in all its forms as a key element for building and retaining an inclusive, capable and sustainable workforce.
Flexibility in employment, which includes part-time working, is a key aspect of creating a diverse workplace, and will support and facilitate achieving gender equality.

One of the key reform priorities of the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018* (Strategic Action Plan) is People and Culture. It envisages a future state in which:

- the emergency management sector is characterised by a culture of respect, cooperation and innovation;

- the sector’s leaders consistently promote and model these values; and

- the diversity of the workforce reflects the communities it serves.

The Strategic Action Plan is developed under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, and sets out the vision and strategic priorities for Government and the emergency management sector and guides sector reform.

It contains initiatives to strengthen the collective capacity and capability to meet evolving challenges, and builds the governance, leadership, and systems to support these efforts.

Flexibility, whether it is reflected in work hours, location or other arrangements, makes organisations more sustainable and able to adapt to change. Importantly, it also enables organisations to attract and retain talent and build capability and a workforce that is able to work smarter and be more effective. It is critical to maximising productivity and building a high performance work culture.

For these reasons Emergency Management Victoria is supportive of the position adopted by the CFA and the MFB. Amendment of the Award as a safety net to permit part-time employment across all fire agencies in Victoria and other States is an important step in achieving the reform priorities.

Craig Lapsley PSM  
Emergency Management Commissioner, Victoria  

26 February 2016