



21 May 2015

BULLETIN

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INCREASE

The Treasurer has announced yet another increase to the ESL.

It is extremely concerning that Treasurer Kousantonis finds it appropriate in his media release to use the CFS branding and the good work of volunteers to justify yet another levy increase to the people of South Australia.

The Treasurer speaks of the benefits the ESL increase will supposedly deliver to the volunteer agencies, but fails to disclose how much of the increase is required to pay for unfunded liabilities such as wage increases under Enterprise Bargaining Agreements, budget blowout and efficiency dividend for the paid services.

Treasurer Kousantonis also fails to identify that in the past events such as Sampson Flat have been funded by the State Government through a General Revenue Contingency fund and that Federal Government funding is allocated when a State of Emergency is declared, as was the case with the Sampson Flat Bushfire.

The Treasurer cites in his media release that \$6.7 million will be set aside to fund Cancer compensation claims for CFS volunteers, yet the CFSVA is aware of only 3 cancer compensation claims made by CFS volunteers since the legislation came into effect in July 2013.

Last year the ESL increased by over 1000% for some volunteers. At the time the CFSVA and volunteers raised concerns directly with the Treasurer and were told by the Treasurer to just accept it as the Government would not back down on the ESL increase nor consider concessions for CFS volunteers.

Treasurer Kousantonis' position was a double whammy for volunteers as not only were volunteers hit with the sharp increases, but also had to endure the wrath of some members of the public who took out their frustrations at the levy increases on volunteers. The patience of CFS volunteers is running thin, with many seriously contemplating their future commitment to CFS.

It is time for the Treasurer to realise that the CFS is not a convenient method through which to justify increases in the ESL, and to publically disclose the total funds realised through the ESL; to provide a complete breakdown of the allocation of ESL funds; and disclose the amount of Federal Government funding received by the Weatherill Government for the Sampson Flat Bushfire effort.

Sonia St Alban
Executive Director
Country Fire Service Volunteers' Association (Inc)
Email: sonia.stalban@cfsva.org.au

