

BULLETIN

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To ALL UFU MEMBERS

FISKVILLE UPDATE – TIME FOR THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT & CFA TO ABANDON THEIR IN-HOUSE INQUIRY INTO FISKVILLE

Herald Voteline - 1178 voted “Yes”

As members would be aware, the State Government of Victoria and the CFA have approved an inquiry into the Fiskville revelations. **The major flaw however is that the investigation is to be conducted by the CFA itself.** There is an obvious conflict of interest in the CFA investigating its own potential wrong doing and liability.

Yesterday the Herald Voteline asked the public the following question: “***Should there be an official inquiry into the Fiskville cancer town scandal?***”

The Voteline outcome was:

1178 voted “Yes”

90 voted “No”

The revelations about Fiskville are extremely sad for the UFU community. As reported in the media, it appears that the use, storage and transport of harmful chemicals at Fiskville (including known carcinogens) has possibly already been the cause of premature death and serious health conditions. We know people who have possibly been victims of these chemicals, and we know many more firefighters who may have been exposed.

We are naturally worried about the revelations and we are extremely interested in learning the truth as is the public by the overwhelming response. There are many questions that need answering, but the most important questions are these:

- What were the chemicals involved?
- When were employee's exposed?
- What were the levels of exposure to employees and their families?
- What health risks are associated with exposure to those chemicals?
- What did CFA know?

The *truth* will help potential victims and their families receive the right medical advice and treatments. It will enable victims to take whatever precautionary or remedial measures are available to protect them and their families against the related illnesses. There is no time for delay. The truth needs to come out immediately and urgently in a framework of a properly constituted legal inquiry.

As also reported in the media, there are concerns that the CFA may have possibly known about the chemicals and that CFA employees and their families were being exposed. It is also possible that the CFA chose to stay silent and cover up those risks. An investigation must also determine the CFA's culpability. Did they know about and then cover up the dangers?

The underling question is: ***'Why has CFA chosen to conduct an in-house inquiry when the overwhelming majority of people want an independent inquiry?'***

While on ABC 774, Mick Bourke could not find one reason - not one single justification - for the CFA's decision to avoid an independent inquiry. He had no defence to the assertion put by the ABC radio host that the CFA's internal inquiry is fatally flawed because it will forever be subject to allegations of conflict of interest, perceptions of bias, and perceptions that it is designed precisely to prevent the truth coming out and protect the guilty.

Only an independent inquiry conducted by a competent agency (such as the Coroner, or such as a Royal Commission) can provide CFA members (and past and future victims of contamination) with trust and confidence that the truth is being uncovered. Only via such an independent inquiry will victims find peace of mind that the exposure at Fiskville has been investigated openly, honestly, without fear or favour, and to the fullest extent.

Perhaps the most critical point to make here is that the decision to conduct an in-house inquiry is causing people stress and anxiety right *now*. The victims and potential victims, and anyone concerned about Fiskville, simply do not want it.

The UFU has made application to the Victorian Coroner requesting for a coronial inquest to be held into these matters.

Strength in Unity

READ OUT AT MUSTER AND PIN ON NOTICE BOARD

Authorised by Peter Marshall, Branch Secretary