

CFMEU Exceeds One Million Dollar Pledge to Victorian Bushfire Appeal

Tragedies such as these remind us all of the collective essence of the human condition.

It is this impulse to band together and help those in need that is the wellspring of trade union activity.

In this light all three Divisions of the CFMEU have been hard at work raising the one million dollars that the union pledged to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

The tragedy has taken its toll directly on all the Divisions of the CFMEU with FFPD member, OHS representative and former Shop Steward Harley Morgan and wife having been confirmed as victims of the Marysville fire. As well the Mining and Energy Division's Martin Schultz was another victim at Callignee.

The partner and children of a mill supervisor have also died in the fires. The houses of 8 FFPD members have been destroyed along with 12 lots of outbuildings and 7 lots of livestock. Also 12 Mining and Energy Division members and 5 Construction and General Division members have lost their homes.

The effects of the fires have directly affected FFPD workplaces, with 3 sawmills and a timber yard completely destroyed and another two sawmills sustaining damage. The long term viability of the timber industry in the Central Highlands and Gippsland regions is under threat with massive losses of plantation and native forest.

Many CFMEU members belonging to their local Country Fire Service have fought the fires. Their bravery and that of the firefighters in general are an inspiration to us all. It is a stark reminder that some of the most useful work done in the community is done voluntarily. In response to the unfolding tragedy CFMEU members have dug deep and the target donation of one million dollars has been passed.

FFPD members have passed motions of sympathy in their workplaces and raised \$75,000 by pledging minimum \$20 levies per member.

Members of the other Divisions, Construction & General and Mining and Energy Division are also busy raising funds. Workers building the Bluewater Collie Power station in WA donating \$140,000 on top of \$50,000 donated by the WA C&G Branch. Victorian construction workers have raised \$120,000 in site collections with the Vic C&G also donating \$50,000. So far the NSW C&G Branch has raised \$25,000 coming to a total of \$385,000 for the Construction and General Division.

Northern NSW District Miners have raised \$120,000 with the Southern NSW District raising \$100,000, the Queensland District have raised \$30,000 with the West Australians raising \$7,500. With the Mining & Energy Division as a whole contributing another \$333,000 their total contribution comes to \$590,500.

The total raised so far is \$1,025,000.