

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Minister for Water



Wednesday, 16 December 2020

FIRE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION MONITOR APPOINTED

The Andrews Labor Government today announced the Honourable Niall Blair as the inaugural Fire Services Implementation Monitor.

The Monitor is a new independent entity established under changes to the Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958 (FRV Act) that commenced on 1 July 2020.

The Monitor will assess and review the progress of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) in completing actions specified in my Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan and future iterations of the Plan.

The Implementation Plan sets out actions required to be completed to embed and operationalise the new fire services model set out in the 2017 Fire Services Statement and the FRV Act.

Mr Blair brings with him an extensive experience, having held a range of senior appointments in the New South Wales Government. He was previously the Minister for Primary Industries, Regional Water, Trade and Industry and Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water.

Mr Blair was Deputy Leader of the Government in the NSW Legislative Council, Deputy Leader NSW Nationals and Parliamentary Secretary Police and Emergency Services. He is currently the Professor of Food Sustainability at Charles Sturt University and has served as a retained firefighter in the NSW Fire Brigades.

He holds a Bachelor of Applied Science, Horticulture from the University of Western Sydney and a Masters in Occupational Health and Safety from the University of Newcastle.

Mr Blair has proven financial accountability and corporate governance experience with a strong background in risk management and safety, quality and environmental management system development and auditing, including experience as Lead Auditor in OHS Management Systems.

In Mr Blair's role as Monitor, he will engage closely with CFA and FRV and other agencies and assess ongoing efforts and progress against the Implementation Plan. The Monitor will also assess the impact of the fire services reforms upon the financial sustainability of both agencies.

The role will be critical in ensuring that CFA and FRV undertake necessary and outlined measures so that they can meet existing and future demand and keep Victorians safe.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"Mr Blair's extensive career in government and strong understanding of complex multi-agency environments will help ensure our fire services remain on track to successfully deliver on our fire services reform."

"I congratulate Mr Blair on his appointment as Fire Services Implementation Monitor – this is an important step in making sure the reforms achieve positive and sustainable changes to our state's fire services."

Quote attributable to Fire Services Implementation Monitor Niall Blair

"I am honoured to be appointed in this position and to have the opportunity to work closely with both those on the frontline and behind the scenes – all who work tirelessly every day to keep our communities safe."

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