



MEDIA RELEASE

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ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY REVIEW MUST BE OVERSEEN INDEPENDENTLY

The United Firefighters Union – ACT Branch has called for the implementation of the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Executive Alignment Review to be undertaken by the ACT Chief Minister or the Attorney General after a scathing report on the organisation's culture was released yesterday.

United Firefighters Union ACT Branch Secretary Greg McConville said ESA staff and the community needed confidence that the review would be handled fairly and objectively.

"The independent report by Professor Tony Walker ASM has been scathing of the ESA's leadership.

"It confirmed that despite high professionalism and collaboration amongst frontline emergency services personnel, operations within the ESA itself were 'at times chaotic', and the organisation maintained a culture of fear, blame and lack of trust.

"We note that the results of Prof. Walker's review reflect an ESA Staff Survey undertaken in 2017, which delivered similar results about poor organisational leadership and culture. Since then, five years have passed, and the cultural and leadership problems at the ESA continue to persist.

"Now that this phase of Prof. Walker's review is complete, it's critical that both ESA staff and the community have confidence that implementing the review's recommendations, which we expect will have far-reaching impacts on the ESA's current executive leadership, is undertaken in a fair and objective manner.

"Given that the ACT Emergency Services Minister Mick Gentleman is [on the public record as expressing 'full confidence in the ESA's executive leadership'](#), the United Firefighters Union asserts that the Minister is not best placed to undertake the implementation of the review's recommendations in a manner consistent with the community's expectations of transparency and objectivity.

"We, therefore, call for the next steps of the ESA's Executive Leadership Alignment Review to be overseen by either the ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr or Attorney General Shane Rattenbury.

Mr McConville said that the importance of independent, external review on matters about the ESA could not be understated.

"In addition to Professor Tony Walker's review, the independent review by the ACT Auditor General into the procurement of an electric fire truck has revealed deeply concerning conduct on behalf of the ESA. The union believes that much more is yet to be revealed regarding that matter."

ACT UFU Secretary Greg McConville is available for interview and comment on 0488 000 465.

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