

16 NEWS

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CFA harassment claim Culture shock

AN ACADEMIC who investigated rampant bullying and sexual harassment within Victoria's Country Fire Authority says she was also targeted and harassed by senior managers for her work.

Professor Catherine Taylor says she's "haunted" by what she heard from 550 non-operational staff at the CFA, including sexual assaults that were covered up. Women reported they were sexually harassed and subsequently bullied and ignored if they complained, while men also reported bullying and harassment by management.

"Staff revealed quite clearly, with great clarity and depth, that their attempts to report sexual assaults were met with them being threatened about consequences and repercussions, having their reports dismissed," Prof Taylor told 3AW yesterday. "I have been haunted by this data."

Prof Taylor was commissioned to do the report by former chief executive Lucinda

Nolan. Ms Nolan resigned rather than support a controversial union pay deal, and subsequently Prof Taylor said she was no longer wanted.

She said "senior people at CFA" told her she would be "witch hunted out", and she later went on stress leave.

Opposition Leader Matthew Guy wants a judicial review of the CFA and Metropolitan Fire Brigade, with the power to take evidence under oath. But Emergency Services Minister James Merlino said there had already been reviews of the fire services and the Government was well aware of the problems.

"We've had poor culture for many years and that stems from a toxic relationship between management and its workforce," he told reporters.

Prof Taylor said many of the respondents said the "militant" United Firefighters' Union was the reason nothing could change at the CFA.

The union rejected the claims.



CREEK SAVIOURS: Shenandoah Bruce, Brendan Condon, Jeremy Minter and Ashley Sheldrick.

Picture: ALISON WYND

Creek project lands award for developers

TESSA HAYWARD

THE transformation of Warrallilly's creekline and waterway project has been recognised with the Landscape Victoria 2017

Landscape of the Year award.

Australian Ecosystems worked on the Armstrong Creek project, which involved growing and planting more than a million indigenous plants and installing hectares of rockwork.

Australian Ecosystems director Brendan Condon said the project was a great example of how nature could be brought back into suburbs.

"The beneficiaries of when developers go above and beyond will be their residents — there are more inviting

living spaces and you are closer to nature," Mr Condon said.

Warrallilly project manager Jeremy Minter said winning these awards demonstrated that a skilled, dedicated and passionate team of consultants and contractors could create special places for native flora and fauna as well as residents.

"This is a bespoke landscape restoration project that will leave an important environmental legacy in the region," Mr Minter said.

The project also won awards for Use of Plants in the Landscape, Landscape Management and Maintenance and the Natural Built Environment.

The restoration has seen the transformation of a degraded waterway into a series of wetlands, watercourses, parks and walking paths.

Stretching several kilometres, the project captures and treats stormwater, protecting the downstream environment.

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