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YELLOW SHIRT DEBACLE AT RFS

News that the Rural Fire Service (RFS) has wasted up to \$400,000 on 7,500 useless yellow shirts for volunteers is yet another bungle which demonstrates the incompetence of the Keneally Labor Government, according to the NSW Liberals & Nationals.

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Melinda Pavey today said the yellow shirt saga was an example of how not to carry out change in a diverse organisation such as the RFS.

"This has been a classic stuff-up and demonstrates the Keneally Labor Government's addiction to top-down decision making, rather than genuine consultation with people affected by its actions," she said.

"When the Keneally Labor Government first directed all RFS volunteers to wear long-sleeved yellow shirts, many volunteers were outraged at the waste of resources and the inappropriateness of the shirts.

"The uproar only intensified when it was discovered the shirts became see-through when wet.

"RFS paid staff were also initially 'encouraged' to wear the shirts to make it appear the change was being widely adopted, but this later became an official directive as the staff too, did not like the shirt.

"In the latest twist, the 7,500 shirts already produced have been found to be useless, requiring their reissue.

"There is no doubt much more than \$400,000 has been wasted on this farce, money which could've funded improvements to brigades across the state or been put into hazard reduction to reduce the mounting bushfire threat next summer.

"It is clear the entire culture of the RFS needs to change to include volunteers in decision making – after all, they are the ones who are putting their lives on the line to protect their communities.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to making NSW number one again and one way in which this can happen is by decentralising bureaucracies and involving people in the decision that affect them," Mrs Pavey said.

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