POSITION UNTENABLE: SHADOW EMERGENCY SERVICES MINISTER MUST GO

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Brad Battin must resign or be sacked following his disgraceful comments about Black Saturday firefighters.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly last week Mr Battin said:

“When we go back to February 2009, the minister should be able to tell us how many career firefighters were on the firefighting ground on 7 February for the first 5 1⁄2 hours of Black Saturday. I can tell the house that it was zero.” Brad Battin, Legislative Assembly, 10 May 2017

Mr Battin should be ashamed of himself. Not only are his comments completely untrue, they are incredibly hurtful. Firefighters will not forget these comments.

An apology is not enough; he has proven himself unfit to be Shadow Minister for Emergency Services.

Our brave firefighters put their lives on the line fighting the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 and they shouldn’t be used as political footballs by a desperate opposition.

These comments are an insult to all firefighters who served during Black Saturday, a catastrophic day that claimed 173 lives.

The Liberals have been vilifying our career firefighters for years and continually pit career and volunteer firefighters against each other - but this is an all-time low.

For the record, career firefighters from the CFA, MFB, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning were deployed to fight multiple Black Saturday bushfires. They worked side-by-side with volunteer firefighters across the state.

This is now a test of leadership for Matthew Guy – does he stand by his Shadow Minister’s disgraceful attack or does he remove Mr Battin from his position?

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier and Minister for Emergency Services James Merlino

“Brad Battin’s position is untenable - he simply can’t represent emergency services in the parliament after this attack.”

“These disgraceful comments are deeply hurtful to all firefighters who fought the Black Saturday bushfires – a catastrophic day for our state.”

“If Mr Battin refuses to do the right thing and resign, then Matthew Guy must sack him.”