

Prue Purdey

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2017 8:19 PM
To: LCSC
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission on Proposed Changes to Victorian Fire Services

To the members of the LCSC.

Sirs,

My name is Peter Graham and I am a member of the Meeniyan/Stony Creek Fire Brigade and have been for a period of about 8 years. I joined the CFA after retiring from my position as a Commander with the Victoria Police in 2005.

I have observed that the CFA is staffed by groups of dedicated volunteers consisting of farmers, labourers, retired persons and people who have a wide ranging degree of work backgrounds. I have seen that all these persons work well together, are very keen in learning new skills that will assist them in firefighting duties, and all possess the skills in the use of the specialised equipment on issue to the various brigades. From a perspective of working in a highly trained and professional organisation, in this case the Victoria Police, I can state that the difference between volunteers and a professional group is marginal.

I am writing in support of the CFA being left as an organisation of volunteers assisted by paid professional staff as currently exists. In a full time paid organisation during major operations such as bushfires, salary costs escalate when paid employees are required to work overtime whereas volunteers cost nothing.

Members of my own Brigade have indicated that they will resign from their voluntary positions if the changes as proposed proceed and this causes me some concern as we are already experiencing difficulties in recruiting members, and I have heard of many other Brigades where similar sentiments have been expressed.

I believe that the proposed changes to attendance at fires and accidents by paid personnel will result in very long response times, and in the case of fires, quick attendance is critical, as is the same at motor vehicle accidents.

I believe that the proposed Bill being discussed is riddled with unanswered questions and threatens the operations of a very successful organisations. It appears somewhat ludicrous to me that professional firefighters in the current MFB can assume the knowledge gained by members of the CFA over many years of bush fire fighting as well as the knowledge of the myriad locations throughout Victoria where the current CFA members have, there being no substitute for the local knowledge possessed by the CFA members.

I trust and hope that the Committee will examine this Bill extensively and also lift the veil of secrecy that seems to surround the this Bill and its contents. I am not seeking confidentiality in regards to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Graham APM
Secretary - Meeniyan & Stony Creek Fire Brigade