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6th July 2017

To the Members of the Upper House Select Committee regarding the Fire Services Restructure Proposal;

The Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 proposed should have been consultative, especially with the VFBV which represents a huge section of our volunteer firefighters. This is a requirement of the CFA Act.

The rationale behind this legislation is fundamentally flawed with no valid operational reason to change what has been a very successful fire fighting organisation.

The Reform Bill must be separated from the Presumptive Rights Compensation Bill and volunteers must not be discriminated against paid staff as in the proposed Compensation part of the Bill.

By splitting the integrated stations with paid staff together with their equipment, and volunteers with their equipment, as proposed, I believe, would see a lot of antagonism between the crews leading ultimately to resignations by the volunteers and thus a considerable loss in the State's strong surge capacity. This would be a huge cost inflicted on the State and can't be ignored.

Ultimately the Fire Services Reform has no justification and should be abandoned so that all CFA country fire stations remain solely in the CFA. The MFB could be slowly expanded to incorporate Melbourne's growth if and when the need arises.

The ongoing cost of this proposal needs further research and explanation to justify any implementation of the proposed changes.

Thank you for your consideration

John Hunter Chapman (Retired Group Officer & volunteer of Stoneleigh Fire Brigade)

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