

eSubmission -Select Committee

## Firefighter Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform Bill) 2017

Submission to Parliamentary Select Committee on behalf of the Bogong Group of Brigades CFA

My name is Ron Leary. I am currently the Group Officer of the Bogong Fire Brigades Group in District 24. Our group contains 14 brigades from Falls Creek to Kiewa to Stanley. We service the Kiewa Valley of Alpine Shire and the southern half of IndigoShire.

### **Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria**

If there is to change, let it be positive and progressive towards an effective, efficient and inclusive CFA. Let there be respect between, and for, both volunteers and staff; paid and unpaid. Let respect be maintained and honoured at all times, by all involved CFA or FSV.

We need to maintain the “Chain of Command” and the AIIIMs structure that currently exists and allow the many volunteers that are qualified to fill positions in the AIIIMs structure to fulfil their roles. This is especially relevant where CFA brigades will be working with FRV in their own CFA brigade areas in Level 1 and Level 2 incidents.

### **Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery**

With the proposed establishment of Fire Rescue Victoria, concern is expressed that the CFA budgetary allowance for plant and equipment will be substantially reduced. Keeping brigade equipment current is vital to providing quality delivery service.

Clarification is sought regarding training. Will the current CFA Training staff be seconded to CFA from FRV; or, will FRV supply the training staff?

The preferable model would be that the Training staff be seconded to the CFA, as CFA volunteers require flexibility in training sessions so that careers may be maintained.

A high priority need to be placed on the Mental Welfare of staff and volunteers. Respect and trust between all is vital to maintain unity and the ability to work as a cohesive unit is vital to managing workloads. FRV personnel being seconded into CFA may cause disunity. In the current uncertainty, there are cases where this may be occurring. We need a cohesive service to maintain the high standard expected.

### **Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision**

The disbursement and use of equipment between the proposed Fire Rescue Victoria and CFA is concerning. Will each service have access to specialist equipment, and will this

equipment be made available when requested from the other service. This is especially relevant in campaign fires.

The cost of rebranding, salaries and additional facilities and equipment for FRV, and any reduction of income from the Fire Services levy and Government funding would have a detrimental effect on the CFA budgetary capabilities.

### **Underlining policy rationale**

The impact of the Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) legislation will have an impact on the delivery of emergency services throughout Victoria. It will be important that there is a fair and balanced representative positions of all emergency services that operate in Victoria. We need to ensure that our communities are represented.

The presumptive legislation should be equally applied to all emergency providers regardless of their level of engagement within the state. Everybody needs to be treated equally in regards to health and safety from the initial response to final recovery.

Ron Leary

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