

Travis Carter  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

5th July 2017

**Assistant Clerk Committees**

Department of the Legislative Council  
Fire Services Bill Select Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

***Submission - Restructuring of Victoria's fire services***

I have been a Volunteer firefighter with CFA in an urban brigade for over 20 years. I have responded to over 2500 calls and have been working closely with career firefighters since I started. Beginning my CFA volunteer work at an integrated brigade (Dandenong) I transferred to a fully Volunteer urban brigade (Narre Warren).

I am a firm believer that change is required and the fire service restructure proposal brings about change, I however am against the current proposed bill.

My reasons for requesting the bill be rejected are not to offend our staff, or stop progress, or to stop the necessary cancer legislation. The reason is because of the way the legislation is being introduced, with lacking consultation and to sort out a long standing EBA issue with our career firefighters.

**Firstly, the matter of the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation:**

1. The bill should protect all firefighters that have been diagnosed with cancer in the last 10 years as well as in to the future. As I have read the new legislation will only will protect firefighters from July 2016. I have a friend that has been diagnosed with cancer who has been a firefighter for over 25 years however; may not be covered because he was diagnosed over 18 months ago.
2. The firefighter's cancer bill should be removed from the fire service restructure, it's obvious this was put in to fast track the fire services restructure which is fundamentally wrong. This legislation should be voted on separately.

**Secondly the matter of the restructure:**

1. It is evident that this restructure is simply to make it easier to pass an EBA for the CFA career firefighters. If this is the reason, then to me some of the future EBA items will affect CFA volunteers without any need for consultation with CFA volunteers. This would make for an even worse situation than we currently have.
2. CFA operational management will be transferred over the FRV under the new reform. This is unlikely to inspire confidence in the CFA volunteers that their managers have their interest at heart. It is a fundamental mistake to transfer Ops Manager and Ops Officers to FRV.
3. Our operational career firefighters provide CFA volunteers with training, skills, advice and future direction, all things that I am concerned could be lost if the reforms are implemented and we are pushed further apart.
4. I am concerned for the potential loss or decline in our neighbouring integrated brigades volunteer capabilities in the future. On difficult wildfire condition days, we often lean on these volunteer crews to man trucks for deployment across the state. I have personally been involved in organising strike team crews where we have utilised neighbouring integrated volunteers on strike teams. If they dwindle away, where will we get the extra required crew from?
5. There is a lack of detail and no implementation plans.
6. Decisions related to the committee for fire service boundaries must consider all factors around community safety, not just because an area is built up. SDS (Service Delivery Standard), brigade pre-planning, performance and the ability for Volunteer brigades to be supported by career firefighters should also be factors.

In conclusion, I feel that there is no justification for the proposed changes in the current legislation and I'm unsure how the future will look for Victorian fire services.

Given Victoria is one of the most fire prone places in the world, wouldn't it be better focusing on decluttering the policy, improving training, equipment and the management structure?

I would have thought it would be better legislation that could join our services together rather than separating them.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Travis Carter.

Travis Carter

1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant - Country Fire Authority