

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Linden Barry [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2017 9:53 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Bill Select Committee submission by Mr Linden Barry

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

RE : Submission from CFA volunteer fire fighter Mr Linden Barry

Dear Committee members,

I wish to lodge a submission for consideration in relation to the work you are doing with the Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

In relation to my background, I offer the following context.

I am an active operational volunteer fire fighter with the Narre Warren North CFA brigade , a fully voluntary brigade located in the outer Melbourne Metro rural / urban fringe area, which responds to approx. 300 fire calls annually.

I have over 30 years of active operational service, responding regularly to both urban & rural based risks, and hold senior incident command endorsements and instructor accreditations. I represent a current and engaged operational volunteer view from a busy brigade in the outer Melbourne metro area which abuts an integrated CFA station (Hallam FB).

The following are amongst the concerns I currently have in relation to the scant information we have been supplied, in relation to the proposed split of the current CFA into 2 organisations, namely the CFA and the new FRV organisation.

1. Claiming that the proposed split of services to increase protection to the community is false, and is a thinly veiled attempt to push through the proposed EBA under another false pretence. Please just call a spade a spade and I would have more respect for you, it's OK to disagree, it's not OK to lie to the residents of Victoria, Victorian Government (read Premier Andrews).
2. The proposed changes have not (to the best of my knowledge) been supported by any other review into the CFA (and we have had many), but amazingly now this Labour government seem to know better than any other review party, and have come up with a non-supported – wafer thin on detail way forward for the future.Amazing.
3. There is a clear lack of process to allow engagement and rational consideration of options in this proposed split. To hold meetings, briefings and now this Committee hearing clearly shows the Government have made a decision, and now search for any supporting data, justification and FRABICATION and MALUPILATION of information to support their decision. Hence the massive unrest and pushback by folks like me on this proposal.
4. CFA would be hamstrung to employ its own staff. All of our Operations Managers and Operations Officers, training and support staff would be hired by FRV, and then seconded

back to CFA. This would result in CFA losing its control over its very own culture and principles.

Really, who thinks this nonsense up ? What other complex large organisation expects another organisation to do its hiring for them, and then “lease back” the staff to them and really expects the culture to remain ?

How much buy in to the role would you have as to CFA activities / culture / future / long term planning decisions, when you are employed by another entity which has a culture and industrial position 180 degrees from that of the CFA volunteer position ?

CFA should absolutely have the capacity to manage its HR issues itself, hire and fire, and not be sub servant to another organisation. This is an absolute must.

5. There has been no real consideration (of any information shared with us to date, and I have sat through many wafer thin briefings re this proposal) on how the new CFA would interact with FVR stations & crews in relation to day to day operations on the fire ground. There has been next to no consultation with our representative body, the VFBV. How dare the government get to the point of announcement, and not engage with the very people it impacts on. The arrogance is hard to comprehend.
6. The control of the proposed Fire District Boundary Review Board (or whatever it is called) is critical in that it appears this board will really dictate the future of where career staff and future FRV stations are established. This takes away the operational responsibility of the Chief Officer to make this operational determination, and hand it to a committee. I am greatly worried that this Board would be the target for influence by the UFU and any overtly union non-volunteer driven government of the day.

This would result in huge financial costs for Victorian Tax payers, and the unnecessary placement of more career staff stations in locations which are serviced well by viable well trained CFA volunteers.

7. The disenfranchised CFA volunteers pushed out of integrated CFA stations, and the volunteers in NEIGHBOURING volunteer stations, will absolutely diminish our surge capacity of volunteers for predominately bushfire operations. Not to mention protracted events like the Portland ship hull fire, the Morwell open cut coal fire, and numerous factory fires which require large numbers of crews for extended periods of time over many shifts and days, which trained CFA volunteers currently support.

In closing, the proposed spilt is ill thought out and union membership driven. There is absolutely a place for CFA staff stations, and more staff, perhaps on just day shifts instead of the current “one size fits all” rostering system.

But the current proposal would drive motivated, well trained and experienced volunteers out of CFA which will lead to less capacity in our fire service.

We cannot “hire our way out” of an industrial dispute and hide behind “we are doing this to increase public safety” argument, before we call this for what it is.

Thank you for taking the time to review one submission from a Victorian CFA volunteer who cares about the safety of his state.

Kind regards,

Linden Barry

CFA Volunteer Narre Warren North CFA – District 8
Deputy Group Officer – Casey Group

I am contactable on mobile [REDACTED] should you require any further detail as to my comments, or on this email address.

I am not seeking confidentiality in relation to this submission.



Linden Barry

**Deputy Group Officer Casey Group
Fire Fighter Narre Warren North Fire Brigade**

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Protecting lives and property



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