

From: Katrina Rainsford
To: [LCSC](#)
Subject: [Suspected Spam] Submission Cr Katrina Rainsford Inquiry into Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
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Submission into Victorian Upper House review into reform of CFA
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Cr Katrina Rainsford
 Farmer, Regional Veterinarian and Shire Councillor of 16 years experience.



I would like to make a submission which can be made as a public submission making the following points with respect to the terms of reference:

Impact on fire services delivery across Victoria

1. Objection to the forced splitting of the Country Fire Authority into a paid fire-fighters and unpaid firefighters organisation in the creation of a new government agency with the main driver being the remuneration and work conditions of employed fire officers. The lack of prior community engagement has been damaging to both the volunteers and paid firefighters working in rural and regional communities.

Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery

2. The failure to demonstrate that the current CFA structure has failed the Victorian communities, rural and regional, other than to satisfy the financial and workplace advantages to the paid firefighters. This has had a demoralising effect on volunteers and caused unnecessary angst to paid fire fighters. Long standing cooperative respectful relationships where paid and unpaid firefighters valued each other's contribution and commitment to the safety of all Victorians and visitors to the State has been damaged.

Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision

3. The lack of transparency in the expenditure of the current Victorian Fire Services Levy and potential dispersment of the future Fire Services Levy's. The FSL was recently introduced and seems now to be a wealth based cash cow now to be tapped into without due diligence.

4. The failure to present a long term financial plan for both the proposed Fire Services Victoria and the volunteer Country Fire Authority.

5. The lack of a policy with respect to the Fire Services Levy like capping like the Shire Rate Capping policy. Failure to present a long term financial resources plan outlying the required or predicted FSL over the next 10 to 20 years. Fair for rates fair for FSL?

6. The introduction of the third level of Fire Response to add to the existing Metropolitan Fire Board and the Country Fire Authority is increasing overheads without evidence of greater efficacy. And the impact and funding of the fourth arm of emergency services agencies, the State Emergency Services, often overlapping with volunteers and involvement in emergency situations in the country, has not been examined.

Underlying policy rationale

7 Whilst work place representation, conditions and fair remuneration for work is important, there is a perceived and potentially real issue of conflict of interest when these are not determined by independent commissions. The conflict of interest inherent when a Labor Government which benefits financially and politically from the

lobbying activities of the union movement, to introduce legislation that provides greater benefit to union supporters is ignored. If this debate was within a local council which is controlled by State Legislation and policy, protagonists would have to declare a pecuniary and direct interest and not be able to be present for any discussion or vote on any such policies where conflict of interest is present.

8. The oversight of investment in new technologies by diverting FSL into research giving a financial benefit by reducing the expense of fire management. Are there strategies to modernisation and efficiency gain in fire reduction and fire control?

ie increasing the safety of citizens in buildings with digital detectors. , improved compliance to fire detectors and inspections remote or in person of facilities, remote sensors and personal alarms, use of drones or robots for fight fighting versus placing people in danger and likelihood of health issues and litigation. The increased use of air support to control fires in rural and mountain regions has reduced the impact of bush fires and personnel required to combat fires.

9. The failure of the mention of the work FAIR in the review of fire response and management. Making Local Government Rates FAIRER was a major election policy of the current Labor Government. Where is the FAIRNESS TEST in this proposed splitting of the fire services and future cost to the property owners who will be taxed to provide this service.

10. Has the review of fire services considered including the large regional cities that could have an MFB model of fully professional paid fire fighters be included in the MFB. Leaving the rural and smaller regional sectors to be managed by the existing Country Fire Authority with the introduction of protection legislation to provide a regional collection and expenditure of the FSL which could be different in different regions reflective of the risk and the level of support and contribution made by local volunteers.

Sent from my iPad