

Submission to the Fire Services Bill Committee

I am currently a volunteer fire fighter and an employee of CFA. I have been a volunteer for 12 years and a CFA Brigade Support Officer for 8 years.

I will start by saying I do not envy you your role. I cannot imagine that anyone can truly untangle the situation the fire services find themselves in within the time you have to make a decision.

I would like to put on the table at the beginning that the courses that all Fire Fighters need to complete are Australian Standard Courses. Volunteers hold the same qualifications as paid fire fighters. We get to complete them in our own time but our qualifications are the same.

I choose to volunteer for my community, I don't expect to be paid, I do it because I know my community need me too. I enjoy my role as 2nd Lieutenant of Tooradin Fire Brigade.

The fact that I hold the same qualifications as a paid fire fighter and I respond to the same fires and incidents as a paid Firefighter one would assume that I would be entitled to the same Presumptive Legislation as a paid fire fighter. The power is in your hands to make this fair. Please separate the two issues of presumptive legislation and the UFU EBA.

If you are being told converting CFA integrated stations into FRV fully staffed stations will not affect the surge capacity then you are being misled. Make no mistake that the reason volunteer fire fighter's volunteer is to look after their community. A lot of work and training goes into being a volunteer fire fighter and if they are not getting paged to fires then there is no reason for them to train or do courses. My brigade has around 20 operational members. During the summer we are on a strike team roster to be deployed anywhere in the state. We can't send members away unless our own area is covered operationally, so if we need to crew an away deployment and we only have 3 members we ask the volunteer members of an integrated station if they are able to help us crew our tanker. The volunteer members of integrated stations are our surge capacity in Casey. On Black Saturday we didn't have enough fire fighters, if this legislation goes through we will have even less fire fighters next large complex fire.

The ramifications on how the UFU and their EBA will affect the volunteers is not known, there has been no true consultation and no information given to us. I honestly believe the current government doesn't care. This is the first time since I have started volunteering that I truly feel worthless. Does the UFU and the State Government hold us in so little esteem that they can't do some research to ensure this a win/win for all involved?

I implore you all to make no decision until all of the ramifications are known.

Yours Sincerely
Megan Angel

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