

I wish to make a submission to the Select Committee re the Fire/Services Bill.

I am a volunteer fire fighter and have held the rank of Group Officer (the first female Group Officer in Victoria) and currently hold the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant.

I would like you to answer the following questions for me please.

1. What will be the cost in dollars of the proposed Bill?
2. I understand that the reason for the Fire Services Bill is to enact the EBA (said by James Merlino), and I am concerned that not enough other options have been considered. The CFA Act took many years of investigation, consultation and planning by people who had vast experiences in fire fighting and suppression. This Bill has been put together in a very short time by a very small committee and my questions are;
  - a) What experience of fire and fire fighting have these people had?
  - b) Who did they consult with?
  - c) Have they considered the implications for all the people and groups (such as SES, CFA volunteers, DELWP, private industry brigades, different communities, forest industry brigades, etc) that the Bill affects, or just the UFU?
  - d) What other options are there to pass this EBA?
  - e) The UFU EBA has been released and what was asked by the UFU was very extensive. The pay and many other items such as sports vouchers and no sales tax on properties were not in dispute and were not negotiated, merely to be conceded. Control over the CFA seems to be the sticking point. What compromises from the UFU have been offered to try to settle the EBA? If none, why not?
3. The State Government did a 180 degree turn and sided with the UFU after Lucinda Nolan (then CEO of CFA) began pushing anti bullying in the CFA. The UFU have recently imposed a Supreme Court Injunction to stop the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission from publishing its Review into Equity and Diversity. The UFU have also been reported as protecting members who have acted in what the community would regard as anti social activities. My questions are;
  - a) Did the UFU stop the VEOHRC from releasing its report at this stage because it would adversely affect the passing of the Bill?
  - b) Will the slate be wiped clean for CFA staff accused of bullying if/when they are transferred to FRV?
  - c) What would be put in place to stop FRV staff from bullying volunteers and support staff?
4. I understand another provision of the EBA is that UFU members cannot take direction from volunteers. This will then be at odds with the current system we work under which is the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System which is regarded as best practice. This system is obviously Australia wide, and Victoria will now be at odds with other states. My questions are;
  - a) If this Bill is passed, who will now be in charge at an incident?
  - b) When will training begin to put a new system in place?

- c) Will this training be done before this next fire season?
  - d) What do we do in the short term?
  - e) If FRV can't take direction from vols at an incident, and I know the vols are unlikely to take direction from someone coming into their patch, then will FRV no longer leave their areas to assist CFA, and how will community reaction be managed when there is a disaster and all valuable resources are not provided?
  - f) What training will be put in place to work across the borders of NSW and SA, or any interstate deployments?
5. It is a big concern that as stations become integrated, volunteers drift away. If they drift away we will have diminished Strike Teams for Campaign fires. My questions are;
- a) I have **seen** interviews on TV where vols and staff appear to be on excellent terms, but I have **heard** many very disturbing stories from vols where this is definitely not so. What has been done to prove or disprove the idea that the vols will drift away?
  - b) If they have drifted away, why have they? **I would like this point especially to be investigated thoroughly – there is a lot of data out in the field from all sides from stations that are now integrated, so I believe an investigation would be easy, and would definitely prove if this happens or not, and the implications would be obvious.**
6. How much of the CFA Act will need to be changed to accommodate this proposed Bill, and how much time will be needed to change it, in that it took many years of consultation to put it together?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jan Cleary