

From: Mark Dryden
To: [LCSC](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission letter to committee
Date: Friday, 7 July 2017 1:08:58 PM

Dear Committee Members,

We are writing to you as a fully volunteer Fire Brigade who are very concerned about the impact the Fire Services Legislation will have on our community and our brigade.

There are many aspects of the Legislation which are of concern but would like to divide them into 2 major areas.

The Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation Legislation

This is very clear:

- The legislation discriminates against volunteer firefighters by making them apply to the select committee. The volunteer firefighters do not have the automatic presumption should they be unlucky enough to succumb to one of the prescribed cancers. Volunteer firefighters will have to be 'considered' by an unspecified panel and be at their mercy. You must agree this is unfair.

- The ‘bundling’ of the Presumptive legislation in with the Fire Service changes is immoral, unethical and shameful, we all agree that firefighter welfare is paramount and welcome the fact that we need presumptive legislation in Victoria however, for the Andrews Government to tie the two legislations into one is a disgrace and should be separated immediately.
- The Government policy is clear when it comes to inclusion, equity and diversity, but the Presumptive Legislation as it stands is contrary to their own policy.
- The government is ‘spruiking’ the legislation as being the same as the Queensland Legislation however the committee need to look closely at these claims as it is far from being the same.

Our concerns about the fire service restructure are as follows

- There has been no consultation. We note with interest that recently the New Zealand Fire Service have announced that after a 3 year consultation process they are going to a ‘fully integrated’ fire service. This is significant in 2 ways, firstly, 3 years of consultation with Staff, volunteers and all stakeholders. Victoria have announced the most significant fire service restructure in decades after 3 weeks and no consultation with staff, volunteers or any

stakeholders. Secondly there is absolutely no detail on how this will work, the Chief Officer himself stated that this reform opens up more questions that I have answers for...is this really the way to make a change. Is the Victorian Fire Service proposing to go backwards?

- There have been statements thrown out by the government that there have been 8 inquiries into the fire service that have indicated that change is needed. These statements are factually inaccurate and basically misleading. Not one of the inquiries into the fire service suggested that splitting the fire service was the best way to go forward, in fact the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfire stated that strengthening the integrated model of fire service is the best way in ensuring the state's capability and capacity to fight major fire events into the future.
- There is no detail about how the staff 'seconded from FRV' will interact, coordinate or integrate with the volunteers,
- The \$44 million allocated for infrastructure will not even scratch the surface of what will be required and furthermore there are no details or commitments beyond the 2 year transition period. Very short sighted approach to something as important as community safety.

Suggestions of how to improve the Victorian Fire Service are many but below are just a few simple ideas that need consideration;

- Daytime manning of brigades with part time Fire Fighters
- Lateral Entry
- Solid leadership structure
- Significant changes to training
- Consultation with all stakeholders
- Significant research into the best model for the future
- Complete transparency
- Strengthening of the Integrated Model

We implore the committee to reject the bill and consider an appropriate proposal following a full review after consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

Your sincerely

Mark Dryden
Troy Wallace
Peter Schaede
Lindsay Paterson
Ryan Larkins
Kyle Mayes

Members Skye Fire Brigade