

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 7:12 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Legislation

Attention: The Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

I take this opportunity to raise my concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Premier Andrews has rushed through the Lower House and attempted to push through the Legislative Council.

I am a professionally trained CFA volunteer fire fighter with the Tynong Fire Brigade and have served as a Lieutenant and Crew Leader and I raise my concern as an experienced fire fighter with some understanding of CFA and its relationship with Victorian communities.

One of my concerns is that the Presumptive Rights (Cancer) legislation has been linked to the FRV legislation, which are two very separate matters.

Specifically, the Presumptive Rights (Cancer) legislation does not treat paid and volunteer firefighters equally. Under this new legislation a paid firefighter with one of the 12 listed cancers will automatically get access to treatment and compensation. A volunteer firefighter will have to be "considered" by an unspecified panel and then may be granted coverage.

Having watched the Fiskville process where members had to fight for their rights, I would hate for my family to have to go through the process. This legislation treats me like a second class citizen. It is unfair, unreasonable and unjust.

With regard to the FRV legislation, Victoria is recognised as one of the most at risk bushfire regions in the world and as such needs to remain one of the best firefighting capabilities in the world. This legislation further isolates Victoria's firefighting capacity and potentially puts the community at risk when the next Ash Wednesday or Black Saturday occurs.

When (not if), another major fire event occurs will we have the surge capacity to meet the challenge? Or, will it have been eroded because due to the loss of volunteers in and surrounding the integrated stations that have been deskilled or sidelined because they are in FRV areas?

I am also concerned about the motive for this new legislation and its potential effects on CFA Volunteers and the community, as it appears to be solely motivated by the need for Premier Andrews to satisfy the desires of the minority Union (the UFU).

I am not aware of any of the previous inquiries that suggested such a split and the Bushfires Royal Commission actually praised the integrated model of paid and volunteers working together.

How are we supposed to work with FRV as an integrated force when the entire push for FRV appears to be driven by self-centred unionism, rather than the desire to help and protect our communities that we as volunteers do every single day.

A simple question: If a CFA volunteer crew arrives at an incident first and sets up Incident Control, will the Union controlled FRV crew be required to work under the control of the Volunteer Incident Controller? If not, then we run the very serious risk of uncoordinated chaos erupting with FRV working in an uncoordinated manner, with the ultimate tragedy being the loss of life.

What is the motive for this dramatic change in fire services in Victoria?

The Premier has spoken about the stream of Inquiries into CFA as a justification, yet to my knowledge, not one of these inquiries advocated for a restructure of CFA. Indeed where CFA's structure was mentioned it was to support the integrated model.

Is this exercise nothing more than a very expensive strategy by Premier Andrews to sell firefighting in Victoria out to the minority Union (the UFU) or is this nothing more complex than a payback for past under the table deals and election support?

Finally, considering Victoria is one of the most at risk fire regions in the world and that this legislation will affect every Victorian household, please consider these key questions,

- 1. Do you believe that the Victorian community has been sufficiently consulted and supports this legislation?**
- 2. Given that the CFA was established as a Volunteer organisation and today remains vastly that, Do you believe that the CFA Volunteers have been sufficiently consulted?**
- 3. Are you confident that this legislation will not harm CFS's surge capacity?**
- 4. Do you believe that even with this short Inquiry that you know enough about this legislation to risk Victoria's fire safety?**

Thank you for considering my submission and I wish for this submission to be listed on the Committee's website.

Regards,

Daryl Hickmott



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