

Submission to Upper House Select Committee

Review of proposed Government legislation (The Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Service Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

As a volunteer CFA firefighter for the past 53 years I wish to express my concerns regarding the proposed changes to fire service delivery throughout Victoria and specifically to the detriment of the CFA and the people of Victoria.

> I consider that this proposal has always been for the sole purpose of appeasing the United Firefighters Union and its Chief, Peter Marshall. The debt owed by Daniel Andrews to the UFU at the last state election for moral, physical and financial support to get the party elected to government has been instrumental in his pursuit of repayment of this debt.

The protracted EBA that has been ongoing for the last few years was the means by which the UFU has sought this repayment from the Government by its passing through Parliament as written and directed by the UFU.

> this EBA had an aim for the UFU to basically take control of the operational functions of the CFA via the veto provisions included therein. A similar veto and control over the MFB has been in effect through veto provisions in their EBA in the past.

> The proposed legislation splits the CFA to a volunteer role only thus giving the UFU total say in all functions involving paid firefighters in the state and thus appeasing the UFU in its endeavours. It will give the CFA no say whatsoever in future EBA's .

> The cost of this change of structure of fire services in Victoria will be immense now and into the future with the UFU having a major say in manpower and operational vetos through the current and probably future EBA's.

> The sacking of the CFA Board and the loss of some exceptional paid staff and volunteers as a result of the government's initial inability to negotiate a reasonable and fair outcome for all within the EBA has been I consider unwarranted and the loss to Victoria has been immense.

> There has been a total lack of communication to volunteers throughout the process leading up to now. The review now underway is the result of this lack of communication and a major reason why the legislation was unable to progress through the Upper House.

> The proposal restricts the CFA in employing and managing its own staff with all operational and training staff being recruited and employed by FRV with those staff sub contracted out to CFA thus a loss in control of the staff that CFA would actual recruit.

> The irreparable damage that has been done to CFA volunteers in this protracted issue to date and into the future cannot be underestimated. The retention of keen, ably qualified and committed volunteers will be at risk if this legislation is passed as is in doubt.

The general public themselves has expressed concerns on this and their confidence in the Government's interference in the operational efficiency of the CFA and its volunteers especially.

> In integrated stations throughout the state the implications for CFA volunteers will be significant albeit their role being unknown at present. The loss of committed and trained members for turnout and support roles within their current area again will be detrimental to service delivery. Similarly the loss of recruitment and training of future firefighters via these brigades will be detrimental to CFA and the fire services in Victoria.

> Significant other concerns have been aired both verbally and in writing by numerous volunteer CFA members and also the general public which will I'm sure again be expressed to the review Select Committee. As such I will not duplicate my thoughts on the issue further.

Thank you for considering the above concerns.

Phil Jones

