

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Warwick and Julie Peel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 8:27 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: The Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Attention the Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

Thanks for the opportunity to raise some of my concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Premier Andrews / Andrews Government / Victorian Government has rushed through the Lower House and attempted to rush through the Legislative Council.

I am a CFA volunteer firefighter and have been a member for 34 years. I wish to raise my main concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Victorian Government has rushed through the Lower House and its attempted endorsement through the Legislative Council.

- Presumptive Rights Legislation

The presumptive Rights legislation does not treat paid and volunteer firefighters equally.

I am disturbed by the proposal to restrict a volunteer's access to cancer treatment or compensation in comparison to that available to CFA career fire fighters.

The presumptive Rights legislation is currently linked to the passing of the Fire Rescue Victoria registration.

Presumptive Rights registration should be passed independently. It was a commitment to CFA volunteers at the last State election.

Under this new legislation a paid firefighter with one of the 12 nominated 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. I am disturbed by the proposal to restrict a volunteer's access to cancer treatment or compensation in comparison to that available to CFA career fire fighters. It only takes one incident to be exposed to dangerous substances resulting in Cancer or illness.

- What is the motive for change.

What is the motive for this dramatic change in fire services in Victoria? Premier Daniel Andrews spoke about the stream of Inquiries into CFA as a justification yet 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 for Premier Andrews to sell firefighting in Victoria out to the UFU?

- The Loss of surge capacity.

The proposed restructure is the inevitable loss of volunteers from proposed integrated fire stations on the urban periphery, particularly Melbourne but also Geelong. Once the stations become integrated, the volunteer makeup of these brigades become much less or lost, any remaining volunteers in these stations become less motivated and their Volunteer numbers drop off dramatically over time. Dramatically losing the surge capacity of these stations in the areas.

- Uncertainty of future funding for CFA.

Premier Daniel Andrews has communicated that the costs will not increase for the next 2 years with no further detail after this time. With the huge increase in costs for the new proposed model, there has been no indication how the Fire Services Levy will be apportioned in the future. The ongoing costs should not be carried by the farming and country towns to support this change. The funding for the CFA and the new Fire Rescue Victoria, should have been explained upfront with a detailed percentage of funds being directed to the CFA.

There is no rush for the Government to quickly proceed with the proposed CFA restructure until the full details of any future consequences upon volunteers and community safety are clarified, and above all, the volunteer base is appropriately consulted.

- Fire Rescue Victoria & CFA management staff all in same Union.

The Proposed structure does not provide / allow for uninfluenced and independent management decisions to be made. The CFA management staff are to be contracted back from Fire Rescue Victoria. The staff employees of both FRV & CFA are in the same union, The Management of FRV & CFA would be better served if they were independent of the union, providing an uninfluenced overview of fire resources.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely

Warwick Peel

