



July 2017

Dear Committee Members,

**Re: The Enquiry into Fire Services Restructure**


I write on behalf of the volunteer fire fighters of the Tooradin Fire Brigade. The membership of our Brigade can only reiterate the position of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria's stance on the proposed restructure of the CFA and MFB.

Our membership constitutes over 250 years of volunteer commitment to our township of Tooradin and the various state-wide bushfire episodes that have occurred over preceding decades. We have 5 National Fire Medal holders currently serving in our brigade and we hold grave fears for the future of fire services in this state if the following points proceed without deeper thought and consultation

- Splitting CFA for no reason other than to drive an EBA through is irresponsible and short sighted
- Claiming it helps address service growth when it provides even less flexibility for CFA to grow resources to match risk compared to the current model
- Financial & Budget implications
- The proposed Presumptive legislation discriminates against volunteers
- It strips control of CFA resources away from CFA. They claim it gets the EBA interference out of CFA but it does not – all it does is block CFA from having a say in the EBA that will ultimately determine how key CFA resources work.
- CFA's "briefings" leaves everyone with more questions than answers – and it is clear CFA leaders are just crossing their fingers and "hoping" that it will all work out. What a way to drive and lead reform for an emergency service organisation!
- The unsubstantiated claim of 8 reviews as creating a need for change – the only consistent themes in previous reviews was a strong disagreement over the EB – vetos, treatment of vols and loss of CFA management decision making etc

- Clear lack of process to allow engagement and rational consideration of options. To hold meetings and briefings AFTER they table their legislation in Parliament and dress these up as consultation is as insulting as it is disingenuous
- Irreparably damages the sense of worth of CFA vols – the thin edge of the wedge to devaluing service and commitment. This overt, partisan and capricious political interference over our service will have a lasting impact and is doing great damage to our morale and confidence in Government and CFA
- CFA hamstrung to employ its own staff. All our OM's and OO's and Training Instructors are to be hired and managed by FRV and then contracted (“seconded”) back to CFA. CFA loses all control over its future management culture.
- The inability of the CFA C/O to employ trained firefighting staff for non-firefighting roles except via FRV – really limits the ability for the long term establishment of culture and networks
- No real consideration of how the operation of integrated stations will operate (with/without vols), both ways – particularly in remote stations like Traralgon, Shepparton, Mildura, Warrnambool, Wangaratta Portland and Wodonga – they have no quick support except from CFA vols.
- The impact of FRV stations on neighbouring brigades – turnouts and first to scene etc – there will be a halo effect around the integrated stations
- No consideration of the loss of the integrated stations to the CFA as centres of excellence and training for surrounding districts
- There is no clarity around what might be unintended (or intended depending on who you are) on the effect on SES and Industry brigades

I close this communication with the understanding that we all want our Fire Services to hold state of the art status in the global neighbourhood of emergency responders and hold confidence in the members of this Committee to deliver a considered and intelligent outcome.

  
 David Bulman  
 Captain Tooradin Fire Brigade