

Attention the Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

I take this opportunity to raise some of my concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Victorian Government has pushed through the Lower House and attempted to rush through the Legislative Council.

I am a proud CFA volunteer firefighter and Life Member of the Yallourn North Fire Brigade

I have been a member for over 40 years and have served as Captain, LT, Secretary, Crew Leader, Strike Team Leader, Divisional Commander, Level 2 Incident Controller, Level 3 Operations Officer, Group Officer and recently awarded Australian Fire Service Medal recipient.

I raise my concern as an experienced fire fighter with interment understanding of CFA and its relationship with Victorian communities.

One of my concerns is that 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 / treatment / compensation

Having watched the Fiskville debacle 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 a disgrace and a slight on my service as a volunteer.

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 those brigades we depend on have been deskilled or sidelined because they are in FRV areas?

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

Both the Premier and the minister have gone on public record to say they have consulted with volunteers on these matters, I for one would like to know when and how this consultation was undertaken.

As a passionate, dedicated long term volunteer I am very disturbed that CFA will not be able to employ its own staff and that FRV will impose staff on CFA for what purpose? Shuffling staff from one agency to another makes no business sense to me!

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. Are you confident that this legislation will not ham CFA's surge capacity?**

- 3. Do you believe that even with this short Inquiry that you know enough about this legislation to risk Victoria's fire safety?**
- 4. What will be the cost to the community in the long run?**

I really believe that the trust and faith that Volunteers have for so long placed in CFA as an integrated organisation with international standing has been destroyed by the government's determination to treat us with contempt and as a pawn in their political games.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Lance King AFSM

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