

**Prue Purdey**

**From:** Sarah [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 June 2017 4:37 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire Services Bill Review

Sarah Krumins  
 [REDACTED]

24<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
 [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for allowing me to put forward a submission re the fire services bill.

I will try and keep it brief although I have hundreds of questions and concerns mainly on the command structure, the presumptive legislation and the cost of this Split of the Fire services.

Surge Capacity will be jeopardised this year and surge capacity will be further jeopardized almost gone by next year. Let me explain why.

Of the surrounding brigades **in my area alone** on average between 5 and 15 members of each brigade are thinking of walking away. If this is happening throughout Victoria then there is at present over 12,000 members ready to walk then what?????????

If these members walk away the remaining members will need to stay local to their area to support their community.

We will not be putting our hand up for Strike team duties. We will not be putting our hands up to assist other states as our loyalty is to our community and our own back yard.

This is an extremely hard decision for any CFA member to make and I liken it to turning up to a car accident with powerlines on the car and seeing the fear on the faces of the occupants while you stand their helpless watching them burn.

That is a memory of the 2009 fires that haunts many fire fighters.

You ask why we all feel this way it's because we are being set up to fail. The commissioner, CFA and the government are not standing up for us they are dictating what we can say do and sugar coating this whole thing **without consultation**.

We have had only one meeting with James Merlino which was last Wednesday he gave us 22 minutes of his time. Of this 22 minutes, all we got was fluffy stuff about how it will be implemented next week. We didn't get any consultation or the opportunity to ask questions.

The people that got to ask questions were picked by a UFU member of CFA staff. We don't get answers to questions even though we all have hundreds. This is being rushed through at a great pace and I am extremely fearful of what will happen this fire season and into the future.

There has been a huge lack of consultation and transparency throughout all of this in regards to costing and command structure.

This is especially important in the Dandenong Ranges as was shown in the 1997 fires we don't have time to ask questions or permission to save life and property. **TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE.**

This bill relating to the split up of the integrated CFA model and creation of FRV is fundamentally flawed and should be rejected and reviewed on at least brigade by brigade case. **Also fully costed before you can vote on it.**

Yes, I agree Melbourne is growing and there might be reasons to put permanent staff on at some stations but you need to look at how this affects not only that brigade but their neighbouring brigades.

How do you think Volunteers feel and will put up with the fact that they are turned away all the time like is happening now? We should be joining up not pulling the organisations apart.

When I first joined 10 years ago moral was good and respect was shown between MFB, CFA Paid and CFA volunteers. In the past 3 years Moral is at an all-time low. Paid CFA are fighting with other Paid CFA members. MFB are also fighting Volunteers are fighting with Paid and other Volunteers.

CFA is not fun anymore no one smiles at the brigade it will take years to repair.

This is not about pay for MFB staff or CFA staff every volunteer I talk to doesn't care about their pay. We have been told that no one will lose their job they will just be working for a different organisation.

I then ask for how long? Will these MFB, CFA members be given long term contracts or will they be pushed out in place of the union members?

How many of the Paid CFA members who come across from FRV will be UFU members? Don't get me wrong we have wonderful staff in CFA and I know some are UFU members but some aren't. it's the I=ones that aren't I am concerned about because they will be pushed out unless they join the union.

Will their Service history still be intact?

Will career and volunteers get the same treatment and respect because at present we are treated very poorly. If I treated my staff the way Volunteers are being treated I would be in the fair work commission.

Will all Volunteers be covered for Cancer at the same level as Paid Staff?

Why cant we separate the presumptive legislation and the Fire Services review?? DELWEP can do it.

If there is such a problem with the Fire Services how they are now why is it only being discussed as an issue now???

I think this split of the services should be looked at Brigade by brigade not as one big bundle but I do URGE you to look at what information you are given and its accuracy as the UFU members have a tendency to provide half the facts or misleading facts.

**Why doesn't the government and Craig Lapsley look at getting paid staff to work together with the volunteers which works well in some stations?** A great example to save lots of money and heart ache would be Paid staff during the day and Volunteers at night this would save millions of dollars no need to change much at all. No rebranding no segregation no problems I URGE you to ask why this isn't possible???

The presumptive legislation being put together with this bill has shown everyone how low this government can go to achieve what they want without consultation. It was a very sneaky way of making everyone feel guilty and obliged to vote for it again without Consultation.

One of my 7 roles within CFA is to feed emergency services personnel on the fire ground. I have over 75 members within my small group representing the 15 brigades within the Dandenong Ranges Group of brigades. We attend the same fires, Hazmat incidents, Car accidents, floods, chemical spills etc as paid fire fighters do. **Would we be covered with this so called Presumptive legislation that is being put forward at present?** There is no clarity as to who is covered and for how long. Some of the members of the DRFG have been doing it for over 60 years so far. In the 2009 fires we fed NON-STOP for over 6 weeks.

Funding for the CFA will not increase it is the same money as now. At present, we cannot get torches for our helmets. Pagers are in short supply, Paper for Stationary for our station. Funding is that hard to get from CFA HQ that we need to sell sausages to buy toilet paper to wipe our backsides. I have to even raise funds to get a Fire Extinguisher for our refreshments trailer at present.

**How much will this FRV set up cost?????**

**Will this amount improve response times or save anyone's life? NO**

My view is we don't need more training grounds we need to be able to access them without the union having control.

At present for our brigade to go use Bangholme campus it costs us over \$2000 that's a lot of sausages we need to sell to be allowed to train at this facility. Why you ask because of the UNION staff working in these facilities and having the control of who, when, how and why. This is happening in ALL training facilities that Volunteers want to train at.

Can I also suggest you speak to each member of the old board as to why they didn't sign the previous EBA? All CFA, MFB and DELWEP members want is honesty from the government and we also want to be consulted and listened to.

The Minister states this is a Hands off the CFA result that Volunteers wanted This is false again, the Minister knows this is misleading. The campaign was to protect Surge Capacity, and this will put it at risk short and long term. Volunteers and CFA staff now along with MFB and Delwep have lost everyone that has tried to stand up for them. Minister Jane Garrett was forced to resign as she would not support this change. The former CFA Board was sacked for standing up for volunteers. CFA Chief Buffone was forced out for trying to deliver on the Bush Fire Royal Commission, and Merlino sent out accusations to tear apart the creditably of a great leader. Lucinda Nolan, CEO, was headhunted to assist in improving the culture of the CFA, and she was ready to make the tough decisions and stand up to those who bullied management. Jack Rush QC called out Minister Merlino on saying the Royal Commission recommended this, the Commission said do anything to protect the surge capacity.

Volunteers now have to sit back and watch while the UFU members plaster the TV and Radio with advertisements saying that Victorians are unsafe relying on Volunteers.

CFA doesn't stand up to condemn this. Craig Lapsley allows it. MFB allows it and we are supposed to just accept it. The major issues I have at this stage are around consultation and the decision to make major change of the fire services for a political payback. The Government could get an EBA through if they stood up to the United Firefighters Union management and demanded the protection of volunteers.

I have spoken to members of all the brigades in my area and they all agree there is always room for improvement, but I am confident the best ideas are in stations, in regions and in firefighter's minds – not in the Premier's office between a limited few who have limited or no fire experience working with the CFA in Victoria.

What I also would like you to do is wait until the report into bullying and a culture of sexism is finalised as this will also show you what the volunteers and especially female volunteers are facing now and will in the future if this split occurs.

I don't want to be trying to fight fires with my hands tied behind my back, duct tape on my mouth and a paper bag over my head.

Think about it while making your decision because this is the state of how things are right this minute here in the Dandenong Ranges the most vulnerable area this fire season.

I struggle daily with my loyalty to the community and my love of CFA but it is now starting to affect my health and my family. I want to continue fighting fires on the fire grounds and standing up for what is right and in the best interests of Protecting Victoria.

**So, I hope the Victorian Government is prepared to fight fires, be a brigade secretary, feed emergency services personal, run fire safe sessions in schools, and be 4<sup>th</sup> Lt at our brigade because I will not be fulfilling these roles any more if this bill is passed any many more will be following me. My family means too much to me**

Sarah Krumins  
(Sassafras- Ferny Creek Brigade)