

**Prue Purdey**

**From:** Chris Thomas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 29 June 2017 6:28 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** SUBMISSION - CFA PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION & FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM ) BILL 2017

The Chairperson  
 Dept of Legislative Council  
 Fire Service Bill select Committee  
 Parliament House  
 EAST MELBOURNE 3002

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to lodge the below submission in relation the above Bill that is currently being considered.

- 1) I believe it is unjust that the Presumptive Legislation is joined with the legislation to break up and restructure the CFA and that the CFA volunteers are proposed to only receive this "benefit" if diagnosed with the specified cancers after the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 which will leave many volunteer firefighters without cover. Why are volunteers being discriminated against in relation to full time firefighters ?? it simply is not just or fair.

There are also questions in relation to the fairness of onus of proof required, in addition to the criteria of proposed schedule 1 what is actually intended by the requirement to satisfy the panel that the volunteer attended the fire "to the extent necessary to fulfil duties as a firefighter" ?

Will there be a minimum number of call outs ?

Will there be a specific list of the "type" of fires attended . ?

What if those historic records are not available ?

What exactly does "extent necessary" actually mean. ?

In my own case I was a volunteer for around 13 years, I attended breathing apparatus training in the smoke filled tower at Fiskville, probably in all that "toxic crap" that has since come to light that has been burnt there and I attended many fires of all types in that period both with and without BA. Some 30 years later, other than the fire of the large historic Warburton Chalet in which my photo appeared on the front page of the Herald Sun as one of the CFA volunteer firemen holding the hose I would struggle to remember what specific fires I had attended. Many others would surely be the same.

- 2) I believe that the breaking up of the CFA as proposed will over the foreseeable future impact on the long term ability of many CFA stations to adequately turn out the minimum number required to attend fires or call outs as the impact that I believe will take place on the moral of the CFA members will dissuade "new blood" from making the commitment required to give their time to be properly trained and ready to meet the now onerous extensive duties involved as a CFA member.

Along with the ageing of the existing members who in most cases will "stick with it" irrespective of what happens until they get too old for active service.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE ARE LEFT ??

HOW CAN THE STATE AFFORD A FULL TIME FULLY PAID FIRE SERVICE. ?? The FSL would then become totally prohibitive and crippling on ratepayers

The CFA has thrived in the past on the country attitude of "giving back to and helping the community one lives in" and it is a fire service that is world class and no doubt the envy of many other countries. Why destructively destroy this model that has worked so well for so long. ??

- 3 ) **What about consultation with Volunteers** ? There has been none. I simply cannot understand why this is all being bulldozed through without giving the volunteers at least the token

option to put in their views prior to putting forward the Bill as well. At the end of the day they are the ones that have done the hard yards in the past and will continue to do so in

the future. One can only assume that the UFU have wanted to set the agenda and the CFA volunteers simply pick up the scraps and are treated as servants rather than contributors.

- 4 **What is going to happen to individual CFA station assets.** ?? the Bill proposes to legislate power for Fire Rescue Victoria to seize CFA brigade assets, vehicles, appliances, property, cash etc until the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. Once again this is simply not equitable as many of these assets have, by necessity been funded by local fund-raising to supplement that which has been provided by the CFA. Once again the CFA volunteers will play second fiddle to FRV without any provision for proper compensation or replacement of those assets.

- 5 ) **Fire services levy.** It is clear to me that the only outcome that will eventuate from these proposals will be huge financial increases and probably an uneven one, in the distribution and collection of the money necessary to fund this model, effectively going back to the clunky unfair old system of a huge differential split Fire Services Levy on insurance between MFB & CFA areas which was scrapped after the Bushfire Panel reviews to become a rate based more equitably spread model.

I do not believe the Bill should be proceeding its present form and further that it should be split into 2 separate Bills so that each arm of the proposed legislation can be debated and considered independently and stand or fall on its own individual merits instead of being bulldozed through in one.

Yours respectfully

Chris Thomas  
 [REDACTED]