

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Ross May [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 8:44 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Inquiry into the Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment Reform Bill 2017

I wish to make the following submission to the enquiry committee.

1. During over 40 years service as forester with the Forest Department and National Parks Service I developed the greatest admiration for the performance of the CFA volunteers when fighting fires alongside our officers. They were and still are rostered on a 24 hour, 365 day basis as to be available at short notice to attend all types of fires and emergency situations. They maintain a high level of skill by regular training exercises at least on a weekly basis and regularly attend specialised training courses.
2. CFA volunteers not only operate within their own communities but are often called on to serve at other, even interstate, incidents. They also carry out fuel reduction and other activities to improve access, communications and fire suppression.
3. CFA volunteers come from all walks of life, ranging from shop employees, farmers and farm employees, a wide range of self employed activities including business managers and trades, bank officers, medical practitioners and public servants. There is therefore an inherently broad range of available skills to deal with virtually any issues which arise during CFA activities. In most cases, CFA activities interfere with the volunteers family and work activities and income. In other words, CFA volunteering involves a high degree of self sacrifice which the participants readily accept.
4. Because their communities recognise the selflessness and high level of skills of CFA volunteers, they are held in very high regard and often called on to fill senior community positions such as council members.
5. The CFA volunteer organisation is a self contained, self managing service with a minimum of full time administrative staff. It has operated efficiently in this way for many years. Therefore there is no justification for interference or dismantling the current arrangements.
6. It has come as a complete surprise that the government intends to subjugate the CFA to permanent employees without the skills and experience of the volunteers. To be generous, one could imagine this is indicative of the government's complete ignorance of the role, performance and standing of the CFA volunteers in country Victoria. To be realistic, the most likely reason is that the CFA volunteers in country Victoria are not part of the ALP city based following and there is little political price to pay by bowing to the Firefighters union demand to extend their power, influence and wealth, some of which will flow into ALP coffers. In other word, the governments priorities are not the best interests of all Victorians but only those of the ALP and its supporters.
7. Indicative of the government's contempt for people not within their camp is the complete lack of consultation with the CFA organisation and members when the proposed legislation was being drafted. This is a gratuitous insult to people who have far greater knowledge of country fire management than anyone other than the fire managers protecting forests and parks.
8. I find it incredible that ALP MPs in country electorates have stayed mute whilst their constituents are treated with contempt.

IN SUMMARY.

I strongly object to the proposed legislation and request that it be withdrawn and amended to leave the current organisation of the CFA intact.

J.R May. John Ross May.
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Sent from John Ross May