

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Norm & Sue Reynolds [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 1:59 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Legislation

The Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as a volunteer member of the C.F.A. with 34 years' service to express my concerns at the Governments, Fire Service's Legislation that is currently under review.

My concerns relating to the Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation are that the proposed legislation discriminates between the provisions for paid and volunteer firefighters. Under the Bill a paid firefighter with a prescribed cancer, will automatically get access to treatment and compensation. However a Volunteer Firefighter will have to be "considered" by an unspecified panel and be at their mercy.

This is unequitable as both staff and volunteers are exposed to the same risks, and therefore contrary to the Governments own policy on inclusion, equity and diversity.

The Bill contrary to Government statements does not equate to the Queensland Legislation, does not meet the requests of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and as previously mentioned does not treat paid Firefighters and Volunteers equally.

My concerns relating to the Fire Service Restructure are as follows;

- The proposal to split the Service into two arms (Fire Rescue Victoria and C.F.A.) will be counterproductive. As the proposal for the C.F.A. Operational Staff to be employed by F.R.V. along with the paid Firefighters and seconded back to the C.F.A. will create three divisions within the Service where there is only one now. This model also conflicts with the Governments statement that the C.F.A. will be all voluntary.
- To date there has been no indication where the support staff will sit in the proposed structure.
- A further counterproductive step is to separate the 35 currently integrated Brigades into F.R.V. and C.F.A. components. This will leave numerous Urban Stations and all Regional Stations without the surge capacity of Volunteer Support. The current proposal to have two alienated Brigades operating out of one location will create wider rifts between Staffed and Volunteer Brigades and destroy the current goodwill at these locations. The proposal that each of these alienated Brigades have their own appliances will lead to a significant increase in the duplication of appliances.
- No consideration has been given to impacts on Operations, Volunteers and ongoing costs of the proposed changes.
- The drive behind the proposed changes seems to be an attempt by the Andrew's Government to avoid compliance with the Fairwork Commission requirements on the E.B.A.
- There has not been any consultation with the V.F.B.V. prior to this Legislation being put up to Parliament as required by the Volunteer Charter and C.F.A. Act.
- The Government has not provided any rationale for these proposed changes and as eight recent enquiries into the C.F.A. have endorsed the current structure, one can only assume it's a means to get around the Fairwork Commission requirements.
- As the Presumptive Rights Compensation and the Fire Service Restructure are two important and complex matters they should be dealt with separately.

For the above reasons I implore the Committee to reject the Bill and have it replaced by a more appropriate proposal after a full review of the Service with the required consultation of all relevant stake holders prior to going to Parliament. To ensure a workable long term result.

Yours Faithfully,

Norm Reynolds

Volunteer Firefighter.

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