



Members of LSCS
Fire Services Bill Select Committee,
Parliament House,
Spring Street,
East Melbourne VIC 3002

June 30th, 2017

Dear members,

As a professional volunteer firefighter of nearly 40 years' experience with the CFA I feel compelled to formally respond to the inquiry into the proposed Fire Services Restructure legislation.

To quantify my comments, it is appropriate to outline my service. I am third generation associated with the CFA. In my direct family, there is a total of 125 years of volunteer service. I am currently an active member at Warragul Brigade and have held numerous officer positions there including First Lieutenant and Communications Officer. I am one of the more active members attending approximately 165 calls annually. I am also active with Inverloch Brigade and Erica and District Brigade where we also own property. I am an ex-captain and an honorary life member of the Keysborough Fire Brigade. I am one of the longest serving members of the CFA peer team with nearly 30 years-service. I have been awarded the National Medal and the National Emergency Service Medal.

My daughter has just become a senior member of the brigade becoming the third generation of the Brewer family to serve Warragul fire brigade.

I am extremely concerned at what the proposed changes will mean to the future of the CFA, a world recognised and admired volunteer based emergency service, in one of the most bushfire prone areas on earth.

The proposed legislative changes are nothing more than a solution to a very long running and embarrassing industrial dispute (CFA EBA) for the state government. It was evident that the EBA was never going to pass if it was submitted to Fair Work Australia. The EBA obviously had negative impacts on volunteers and would be questioned. The only way that the UFU could achieve their goal, of taking over the fire services in Victoria and boosting their member numbers, was the current restructure.

There is clearly no financial benefit for the community from the restructure. In new FRV areas that were previously serviced by one integrated CFA fire brigade, there will

now be a complete double up of fire services. There will be a doubling up of appliances, equipment, stations, layers of management, vehicle maintenance and communications. Quite obviously if this restructure is implemented all Victorians will be affected with increases in the fire services levy. The current system is extremely economical and efficient.

The current CFA structure has always been able to muster large numbers of volunteers in times of major state emergencies including fires and flood. I believe the proposed legislation would seriously affect this "surge capacity." Many of these strike teams have been mobilised from the outer metropolitan ring including existing integrated stations. Today I was speaking with a colleague in this area and there are already volunteers leaving these stations because of the proposed legislation.

The secondment of CFA senior management positions from FRV is also a great concern as there is a great difference in the requirements of career and volunteer firefighters. Similarly, CFA training facilities and instructors should be managed by the CFA. In recent weeks, I have personally witnessed CFA trainers, who were UFU members, refusing to utilise CFA appliances. Undoubtedly the EBA negotiated for the new FRV will stipulate which appliances their staff can utilise and obviously, these will be vastly different to those that volunteers use. It is crucial that volunteers are trained on their equipment and appliances. What is proposed clearly cannot work.

The legislation as it stands is extremely poorly written with many aspects open to interpretation. Many of my questions to upper levels of the CFA management, including the Chief Officer, could not be answered. Many of the minor details have not been considered and it is these minor details that have major impacts on volunteers.

Quite clearly the CFA is a volunteer based fully integrated emergency service. Why are the volunteers concerns not being listened to? Why are we being dictated to? I personally know members who have left the service because of this fiasco and many others anticipating leaving. If successful this legislation will have an enormous and long term impact on fire service delivery and obvious safety impact on all Victorians.

The combining of the Presumptive Cancer Legislation and the Fire Services Review is inappropriate and unethical. It must be separated and there must be no differences between entitlements of career and volunteer firefighters a situation that recent expert opinion disputes.

I have formally notified my captain and District Operations Manager that I will continue to support and protect my community but will no longer respond to strike team requests either as a firefighter, crew leader or strike team leader. Quite clearly the upper levels of CFA management are pre-occupied with answering to a puppet CEO and board and I have no confidence in their ability to look after my health and safety elsewhere in the state. (A copy of this correspondence is included with this submission.)

The CFA should be protected and what is proposed is nothing more than a solution to an embarrassing industrial dispute. If the legislation passes the impact on the CFA and the safety of the state, is a great concern.

(I have received numerous nasty emails from UFU members in recent weeks so request that my name and personal details not be divulged.)



FF. Brian Brewer (Warragul Fire Brigade)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cpt. Brian Dalrymple
Warragul Fire Brigade
Gladstone Street,
Warragul 3820

May 28th, 2017

Re- My service and commitment to the community

Dear Brian and fellow brigade members,

As was mentioned in CO Steve Warrington's address a few days ago, and with this letter, I wish to formally declare my commitment to servicing my local community as a firefighter. This is something that I have done for nearly 40 years.

With this letter, I also wish to formally notify the brigade, and the CFA, that I will no longer assist with any strike team or other duties outside my local community. This decision remains in force indefinitely and until further notice.

The brigades that I have, and do serve have always been welcoming, dedicated, effective and well managed.

This cannot be said for the greater CFA. In recent times their complete lack of dialogue with the volunteers and the volunteer association, has been totally inappropriate, disrespectful and dismissive of volunteers their training, ability, commitment and effectiveness. The fact that we (CFA) are now more than a week from the break-up of the CFA and to date no information has been forthcoming from the leadership of the CFA, from District level and above, further highlights my concerns. In District 9 the only information forwarded, a request for questions on the break up, and a mail-out of the legislation in its entirety, were sent out by myself as VFBV D9 President.

To put it simply I now have no faith in the leadership of the CFA (and in particular following the recent proposed changes) so will not entrust my operational health and safety in anything more than the local brigade.

[REDACTED]

(Ex Capt.) Brian Brewer

cc. Operations Manager D9
DCO Trevor Owen
CO Steve Warrington