

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Sue Paton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 9:44 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Attention the Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Submission from Violet Town Fire Brigades Group, District 22

Dear Committee Members,

At its AGM last week the Violet Town Fire Brigades Group unanimously approved a motion that we write a submission to your committee to express our concerns about the proposed Fire Services Legislation which the Victorian Government has recently passed in the Legislative Assembly and is now considering in the Legislative Council.

The Violet Town Fire Brigades Group is made up of 5 brigades – Violet Town, Boho, Balmattum, Koonda and Earlston.

The volunteer firefighter members of these 5 brigades are extremely concerned about the following aspects of this Fire Services Reform bill for the following reasons –

1. The Presumptive legislation and the Restructure should not be combined into one bill. We believe this has been done to gain false support for the Restructure as Firefighters keen to have the Presumptive legislation become law, will support the overall bill even though they are not in favour of the restructure
2. The CFA volunteers have not been genuinely consulted in the development of the restructure proposal even though the Volunteer Charter signed by the government and the CFA act definitely state that they will be. There has been a clear lack of process to allow any engagement or rational consideration of the options. Instead the volunteers are faced with a completed restructure proposal which leaves them feeling unrepresented, disadvantaged and with many, many questions unanswered especially about the long term outcomes. As a result a barrier of distrust has built up between them and the government.
3. The whole idea of a restructure that splits firefighters into separate organisations was never a recommendation given in any of the enquiries or reports conducted about the CFA. In fact the Bushfire Royal commission actually praised the integrated model of paid firefighters and volunteers working together.

In closing, the volunteers of the Violet Town Fire Brigades Group hold grave concerns for the future of volunteer fire fighters within the structure proposed in the Fire Services Reform legislation. They fear that they will be greatly disadvantaged under the new structure and not be able to operate as effectively in protecting their community.

Thank you for considering this submission

Yours faithfully,

Sue Paton,

Secretary, Violet Town Fire Brigades Group,

District 22