

LCSC@parliamint.vic.gov.au

Attention the Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

I take this opportunity to raise some of my concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Victorian Government has rushed through the Lower House and attempted to push through the Legislative Council.

I am a professionally trained and qualified CFA volunteer fire fighter with Bayles Fire Brigade. I currently serve as the brigade Captain.

I raise my concerns as an experienced fire fighter with some understanding of the CFA and its relationship with Victorian communities.

One of my concerns is that the Presumptive Rights (Cancer) legislation does not treat paid and volunteer firefighters equally. Under this new legislation a paid firefighter with one of the 12 prescribed cancers will automatically get access to treatment and compensation. A volunteer firefighter will have to be "considered" by an unspecified panel and then may be granted coverage, treatment or compensation

Victoria is recognised as one of the most at risk bushfire regions in the world and as such needs the best fire fighting capability in the world. This legislation splits up Victoria's fire fighting capacity and potentially puts us all at risk when the next Ash Wednesday or Black Saturday occurs.

When (not if) another major fire event occurs will we have the surge capacity to meet the challenge? Or will it have been eroded because those brigades we depend on have been deskilled or sidelined because they are in FRV areas?

Another of my concerns is the motive for this new legislation and its potential effects on my brigade members and all CFA Volunteers.

Why do middle management need to be transferred to FRV and then seconded/contracted back to the CFA, why not just leave them with the CFA. Who do they report to CFA management or FRV management?

None of the inquiries held to date suggested this course of action and the Bushfires Royal Commission actually praised the integrated model of paid and volunteers working together.

How are we supposed to work with FRV, a separate organisation with different priorities? A simple question if a CFA volunteer crew and a FRV crew arrive at a fire, who's in charge?

Finally, considering Victoria is one of the most at risk fire regions in the world and that this legislation will affect every Victorian household, please consider these key questions,

- 1. Do you believe that the Victorian community has been sufficiently consulted and supports this legislation?**
- 2. Are you confident that this legislation will not hamper the CFA's surge capacity?**
- 3. Do you believe that even with this short Inquiry that you know enough about this legislation to risk Victoria's fire safety?**

Thank you for considering my submission

Yours faithfully,

Timothy English

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