

Sedgwick RFB
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1 July 2017

Fire Services Restructure

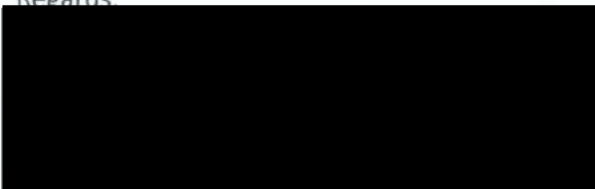
Dear Member of the Parliament of Victoria,

The members of the District 2 CFA Fire and Emergency Management Sedgwick Brigade met recently to discuss the recent changes to the CFA. The result of this meeting included the following concerns:

- That the previous structure resulted in the splitting of CFA for no reason other than to drive an EBA through. We believe this was irresponsible and short sighted, creating a number of concerns for the volunteer CFA stations around ongoing management, resources, funding and confusion over roles and responsibilities.
- There have been claims made that the changes help to address service growth when in reality it provides even less flexibility for CFA to grow resources that match risk, compared to the current model.
- The changes contain a number of financial and budget concerns including ongoing management and maintenance of resources. It strips control of CFA resources away from CFA.
- There are claims that it removes the EBA interference from the CFA, however does not –it does block CFA from having a say in the EBA that will ultimately determine how key CFA resources are utilised.
- The proposed Presumptive legislation discriminates against volunteers by taking away their voice and their decision making.

- The briefings currently provided have left CFA with more questions than answers suggesting that there has been poor planning and no real idea on how to implement the changes.
- The lack of leadership and decision making has caused irreparably damage to the sense of worth of the CFA volunteers, devaluing service and commitment. It has also caused damage to the morale of the volunteers and created a loss of confidence in the Government and the CFA.
- The CFA appears to be hamstrung to employ its own staff. All our OM's, OO's and Training Instructors are to be hired and managed by FRV and then contracted back to the CFA. The CFA loses all control over its future management. Furthermore, the inability of the CFA C/O to employ trained firefighting staff for non-firefighting roles except via FRV restricting the ability for the long term establishment of culture and networks
- There has been no real consideration of how the operation of integrated stations will operate (with/without volunteers), particularly in remote stations like ours where ours and other outlying areas have no quick support except from CFA volunteers.
- We are extremely concerned that the impact of FRV stations on neighbouring brigades – turnouts and first to scene etc –will create a halo effect around the integrated stations.
- This decision was made with what appears to have been no consideration of the loss of the integrated stations to the CFA as centres of excellence and training for surrounding districts.
- There has been no clarity around what the potential impact of these changes on the SES and Industry brigades.

Regards



Brendan Drechsler

Captain

On behalf of the Sedgwick Fire Brigade

Sedgwick Road,

Sedgwick, 3551.