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From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 8:15 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Bryan Wills
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Regardless of the legislation being proposed, the CFA as a volunteer organisation, needs to have great autonomy regarding its staffing for administration, operations and training.

There is a need for greater diversity in the CFA and all staffing should be done on merit and not under the control of a workplace agreement where lateral entry is resisted. The current source for Operations Officers, Operations Manager etc. is typically from station fire officers. The proposed legislation also stipulates that these positions would be filled by contract or secondment from FRV employees.

CFA staffing should be opened to attract individuals from other states and organisations especially those who have had experience with volunteer organisations, eg. NSWRFSS. There should also be scope for suitably qualified volunteers to be able to move into staff positions especially in the area of training. This has been strongly resisted in the past again through workplace agreements.

The concept of the CFA sourcing its staff from FRV, that is providing a career pathway for FRV station staff, is an indication of a merger or takeover rather than a "splitting" of fire services to provide an autonomous volunteer-based CFA. To start a reform on a false premise does not promise a great outcome.

Dissatisfaction with the current CFA staffing, especially in outer districts, is all too apparent with few striking the balance needed to engage with volunteers and provide them with proper support rather than directives, reorganisation and a constant challenge of their abilities.

There is also the observation made by volunteers brigades in the same catchment as integrated stations, that the monies committed to the wages, overtime payments, building constructions and vehicle/equipment provisions for the integrated station make a farce of the austerity measures placed on "small shed" brigades trying to stimulate their membership. The fear is that the proposed legislation will generate a poorly funded

CFA as the FRV advances and takes a significant proportion of the limited funds available for firefighting.

My experience with the CFA has been as a volunteer of 49 years, serving in six brigades, 31 years in an integrated station.

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File1:

File2:

File3: