

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee
Parliament House

Rhys Matulis



Dear Sir/Madam

Submission regarding Fire Services Bill

My name is Rhys Matulis, I have been a CFA volunteer fire fighter for over 13 years on the Mornington Peninsula. I do not support the purposed bill in its current form and I ask that the Fire Service Bill Select Committee recommend that the bill is scrapped.

My concerns with the bill are:

- **The process in which the bill was created and put to the parliament was illegal.** Under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (section 6G) and the Volunteer Charter, the Government of Victoria and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) are required to consult with Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) on any matter which may affect volunteers. Before the government made its announcement and put the bill to the parliament no such consultation occurred.
- **No improvement to fire safety will be achieved.** The government has said over and over again that nothing will change, then why are we as Victorians spending millions of dollars to create a new fire service.
- **Reduction of fire safety will occur – Volunteer Surge Capacity will be reduced and place under threat.** The impact of this bill will be the destruction of integrated brigades across the state and weakening of outer metro CFA volunteer brigades. This will reduce the surge capacity of the CFA reducing its ability to protect Victorian's during summer and large scale incidents such as the Tyabb tanker crash only weeks ago.
- **Moral of fire fighters has been damaged by the proposed reforms.** The proposed reforms have greatly damaged the moral of all fire fighters. This is especially true for CFA volunteers who feel betrayed by the government and that there service is not valued or appreciated. This will have a negative effect on retention and recruitment of CFA volunteers in the future placing Victoria in greater danger.
- **Political solution that has nothing to do with improving Victorian's fire services.**
The only reason that this bill was created and put to the parliament was so that the government could satisfy the United Firefighter Union (UFU) who is seeking repayment for its support of the Labor Party at the last state election.
- **That the Presumptive Rights Compensation section of bill should be spilt from the bill.**
It is clear that the community, fire fighters and parliament support the introduction of presumptive rights for fire fighters in relation for cancer. The government has cruelly connected this to the Fire Service reforms which are extremely unpopular. I ask that the committee recommend the presumptive rights compensation section is separated into its own bill to be passed by the parliament.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and I look forward to the Committee's recommendation that the bill should be scrapped.

Regards

Rhys Matulis