

TO : The Members of the Select Committee for Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

From : Robert Horner AFSM.



**Former President Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association
Life Member Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
Former CFA Brigade Captain, current member**

Re Impact on Fire Service Delivery Across Victoria.

The proposed legislation will impact quite heavily on members in Integrated Fire Stations. Volunteers will be relegated to lesser duties and call outs, and will finish up resigning. These members are currently able to respond as surge capacity to respond to major incidents across the State. This decline will put lives and property at risk.

Effect on Volunteer Engagement And Participation in Fire Service Delivery

Brigade members will continue to protect their communities, as they have done all along. However, the level of support afforded to Brigades is in doubt. CFA was set up to co-ordinate the activities of volunteer brigades and provide the necessary support by paid personnel . How will this support be provided in the future, when members of another service are sent out to volunteer stations. The secondment of others from another organisation is not going to work.

Short Term and Long Term Impact on Cost Impact

This is a frightening one. The cost of re furnishing or replacing existing stations to accommodate Career Fire fighters will be more than has been cited in press reports . Whilst the Government has said that it will provide additional funding, like most Government projects there will be a shortfall in funding and where is that going to come from. Unless there is a commitment from the government to provide additional funding for any shortfall, it will fall on the FRV and CFA to pick up the tab from their budgets. Because FRV has to cover wages etc.the CFA budget will suffer with very little funding to support Volunteer Brigades. Thus we will revert to system that applied fifty years ago, where Brigades had to do their own fundraising to get anything they wanted. What a backward step.

Policy Rationale

Due to the lack of any prior consultation, there are so many aspects of this proposal that people at present have no idea how it will all work. All you get from Minister Merlino is that it will be resolved as we go along over the next two years. NOT GOOD ENOUGH!!! If this Legislation goes through it will destroy any remaining semblance of a wonderful organisation.

Thank you .
R. A. Horner AFSM