

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** Adrian and Mandy Straw [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 11:18 AM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Att Fire Services Bill Select Committee

To Whom It may concern

I wish to address some issues with the new bill before parliament to reform the fire services in Victoria.

I have been a CFA volunteer for nearly 20 years as has my husband. My husband has recently completed 10 years as Captain at Gazette and I have taken up the role of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

My concerns re the reform are as follows:-

- CFA Volunteers are the heart of the CFA, we give our time willingly to protect and service our community, however over recent years our skills and time have been taken for granted and we have on many occasions been deployed with no active role to fill. We all have our own families, businesses, farms and jobs to attend so please don't waste our time. I see that the reform of the fire services puts us more in this position as you know, volunteers are cheap, we cost you nothing in wages, we just need adequate resources and feed. I see that the cost of deploying "professional" fire fighters to large fires will be massive so then volunteers will be called upon more and more for tasks that should be done by paid staff.
- We don't wish to become the poor cousins, with the current reform package, volunteers are concerned that so much money will be required for the restructure that little to no money will be left for volunteers to be able to do their role. We don't wish to be in the position that we are often in here, asking for basic equipment to be told we don't have the budget. We should never have the us and them, we are all here for the same reason, to serve and protect, we shouldn't need separate stations, change rooms or equipment.
- We have one opportunity to get this split right, don't waste it. Make sure it also includes the DWELP or what ever they are called this year, I think it is now Forest Fire Fighters Victoria, I don't know, we can't keep up (another big waste of money) We have so many factions, so many chiefs, so many fingers in the pie that makes managing and working on large fires so difficult.
- Please reduce the bureaucracy, we don't need so many layers, functions and meetings. Let's focus on actually delivering services to volunteers so that volunteers can get the job done. We don't want to be waiting years to have OH&S issues fixed, we don't want to be constantly asking for basic equipment etc.
- Please reduce or remove the influence of the UFU from the CFA Volunteers, they don't need a say in our uniforms, our trucks, our training, our structure and our staff. We just need basics, we need someone to answer the phone and provide answers, we need basic equipment, we access to training, we need opportunities for development not blockages and lack of budget.
- Ultimately we should all be one fire service, not three, makes us all one, makes us the best fire service in Australia. Make us a fire service where everyone is valued and equal. Let's not have multiple agencies with multiple bureaucracies, multiple support services. Make us ONE. We can be one agency that functions effectively, timely and respectfully.

Please remember that the money you are using to restructure the fire services comes from us the volunteers – we pay the taxes and the fire services levy as well.

Please listen to the volunteers, without them you don't have a CFA. Get this right now or you will have a massive mess for years to years to come and waste so much of our money trying to fix it.

Regards

Mandy Straw

Gazette CFA.

*Adrian and Mandy Straw*

