

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 12:49 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 Andrew Lawrence  
[REDACTED]

Secretary  
Casterton Fire Brigades Group, CFA District 4  
[REDACTED]

**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Attention: Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

I write on behalf of Casterton Fire Brigades Group, CFA District 4, (representing nine brigades) to raise concerns about the Fire Services Restructure Legislation which the Andrews Government has rushed through the Lower House and attempted to rush through the Legislative Council.

While there may be a case for alterations to be made which could result in improved service provision, this proposed restructure is not about that. Rather, it is a blatant attempt to give a union what it wants! Last year the proposed UFU EBA was seen for what it was – an attempt by the union to gain control over the CFA. Now, the proposed restructure is designed to achieve exactly the same thing.

The government has claimed that a number of recent reviews have found the need for a splitting of the fire services into Paid and Volunteer organisations. This is simply not true. It is but one example of the false and misleading statements that have been made in an attempt to 'sell' the restructure. No review has called for a splitting of the CFA. In fact, EMV Commissioner Craig Lapsley is on record as saying the integrated model should be expanded. The only consistent theme in recent reviews was a strong disagreement over the proposed EBA – vetos, treatment of volunteers and loss of CFA management decision making etc.

Attaching the implementation of presumptive cancer provisions to the proposal should be seen for what it is, a cynical attempt to encourage the passage of a contentious and divisive change by embedding a popular and well supported measure within it on a "take it all or take none" basis. Apart from the fact that the matters are separate and should be dealt with as such, the proposed presumptive cancer provisions are very unsatisfactory anyway. They do not treat paid and volunteer fire-fighters equally. As such, this legislation

should also be rejected or modified.

The haste and lack of consultation with stakeholders that has been demonstrated by the Andrews government, stands in stark contrast to the process which has just taken place in New Zealand. There, a move TO an integrated model has followed years of public consultation to ensure volunteers and career fire-fighters supported the changes. Why haven't the relevant agencies here even been consulted? Minister Merlino says he has consulted when all he has done is visit brigades to conduct briefings. That is not consultation that is merely delivering sales pitches.

We ask for your help to ensure the proposed reforms are fully analysed and costed before they are considered. Doesn't Victoria deserve this at the very least, instead of the underhand way it is all being done?

Yours sincerely,  
Andrew Lawrence  
Group Secretary,  
Casterton Fire Brigades Group, D04

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File1:

File2:

File3: