

**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 1:52 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

Mrs Heather English  
[REDACTED]

**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Dear Parliamentary Committee,

I wish to make a submission regarding the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

I am concerned about the Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria, particularly surge capacity during major fire events. 35 integrated fire stations on the urban fringe currently have both career and volunteer firefighters. The full time staff manage the day to day incidents in their area. During a major event the volunteers are utilized, providing a huge amount of additional trained labour at short notice. The current system works extremely well. The UFU are running a campaign telling people on the outer fringe that they will be safer under the new FRV model. This is untrue as they are already protected and have career fire fighters at those stations. The only difference I can see under the FRV model is that volunteers will leave and the ability to provide the surge capacity when required will actually be diminished. The government are currently saying the volunteers will still be welcome to stay at those stations however in reality there will be different trucks for CFA and FRV and Steve Warrington recently stated at a meeting in Monbulk that the status of the volunteers at those stations will be "absolutely different" and " All we're doing here is (getting rid of) our 35 primary response areas ... out of CFA. The rest of CFA remains the same."

This wording means that the plan is to get rid of the volunteers at the 35 stations which means a loss of 35 brigades surge capacity. Approx 1500 firefighters on the urban fringe. There will be many less paid staff than volunteers at those stations. I think this needs to be looked at carefully before any decision is made about splitting the Fire Services in two.

In addition to this many volunteers from other areas may leave as we have been told that the FRV firefighters will be seconded back to CFA which means CFA volunteers are working with FRV (who appear to be currently run by the UFU). Under the new model veto clauses will be increased giving the union more power which CFA will then have to adhere to. It is not a complete 'Hands Off CFA' as Daniel Andrews is stating.

Another concern is the long term cost impact on fire service provision. This new FRV model has not been

costed. The re branding of MFB stations seems like a huge waste of money. There will be no difference to the structure of the stations according to the government yet they are going to rebrand every MFB station and the 35 integrated stations. The only reason for the re branding is to get an EBA through for the union which the past CFA board, Jane Garrett and others did not agree with so were sacked.

The government announced the new FRV model saying they had just informed CFA, VFBV and the UFU that morning. Within two business days the UFU had a TV, radio and printed media campaign out putting fear into people living on the outer fringe by stating they are not covered by a professional fire service and we need the need FRV model. The website name [www.firedoesntwait.com.au](http://www.firedoesntwait.com.au) was registered by Peter Marshall a few months before the government announcement. The UFU must have known for months as you don't get a multi million dollar media campaign up and running in two days. I think this needs to be looked into and the reason why the UFU had earlier knowledge than anyone else also addressed. I think the underlying policy rational is to give the union what they want with no regard to the actual safety of Victorians.

The presumptive legislation should never have been put into the Bill. It was put in to push the bill through and is purely for political reasons. The presumptive legislation is so important that it should be given priority and there should be consultation with volunteers about what is actually in it and how it affects the volunteers.

I hope that you will look at these submissions and think carefully about them before just pushing a Bill through to "get it over and done with" as I heard some politicians say in Parliament when they voted on this bill in the Lower House. Politicians are put in the their positions by the public who expect decisions to be made that benefit the community. Victoria was seen to have one of the best Fire Fighting Services in the World. We need to keep it that way and not put the community at risk.

Kind regards,  
Heather English

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File1:

File2:

File3: