

**LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au**

**Attention the Fire Services Bill Select Committee.**

**Dear Committee Members,**

**I take this opportunity to raise some of my concerns about the Fire Services Legislation which the Premier Andrews has hastily shoved through the Lower House and attempted to do the same through the Legislative Council.**

**I am a professionally trained and qualified CFA volunteer fire fighter with the Strath Creek/Reedy Creek Fire Brigade.**

**I have been a**

**member for over 15 years and have served as a lieutenant, or other office for most of this time.**

**I raise my concern as an experienced fire fighter with some understanding of CFA and its relationship with Victorian communities.**

**One of my concerns is that the Presumptive Rights (Cancer) legislation does not treat paid and volunteer firefighters equally. Under this new legislation a paid firefighter with one of the 12 cancers will automatically get access to treatment and compensation. A volunteer firefighter will have to be "considered" by an unspecified panel and then may be granted coverage / treatment / compensation**

**Having watched the Fiskville debacle unfold where members had to fight for their rights, I do not want for my family to have to go through that hell should I succumb to cancer from my CFA activities. This legislation treats me like a second class citizen. It unfair, and unjust.**

**Victoria is recognised as one of the most at risk bushfire regions in the world and as such needs the best fire fighting capability in the world. This legislation splits up Victoria's fire fighting capacity and potentially puts us all at risk when the next Ash Wednesday or Black Saturday occurs.**

**When (not if) another major fire event occurs will we have the surge capacity to meet the challenge? Or will it have been eroded because those brigades we depend on have been deskilled or sidelined because they are in FRV areas?**

**Another of my concerns is the motive for this new legislation and its potential effects on CFA Volunteers I don't understand why we need to split CFA up.**

**None of the inquiries suggested it and the Bushfires Royal Commission actually praised the integrated model of paid and volunteers working together.**

**How are we supposed to work with FRV, a separate organisation with different priorities? A simple question If a CFA volunteer crew and a FRV crew arrive at a fire, who's in charge?**

**Finally, considering Victoria is one of the most at risk fire regions in the world and that this legislation will affect every Victorian, please consider these key questions,**

- 1. Do you believe that the Victorian community has been sufficiently consulted and supports this legislation?**
- 2. Are you confident that this legislation will not ham CFS's surge capacity?**
- 3. Do you believe that even with this short Inquiry that you know enough about this legislation to risk Victoria's fire safety?**

**Thank you for considering my submission**

**Please allow for this submission to be listed on the Committee's website.**

**Best regards,**

**Eric J Smith**