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From: JOAN MCGRATH [REDACTED]
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To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform

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To The Select Committee

I wish to put in my personal opinion of the future of our fire services in Victoria as well as the presumptive legislation.

This will impact on our ability to have the surge capacity should we have another Black Saturday or Ash Wednesday. As a volunteer, and I have been a member at an integrated brigade as well, I would not want to be a volunteer at a non brigade. By seperating the staff and volunteers we are gaining nothing. Having volunteers that were at an integrated brigade suddenly being a seperate brigade with no turn out area, no responsibility. It would be like training for a game and never getting to play. It would also take away from the community involvement that makes the CFA as vital as it is.

As volunteer brigades are a low cost fire service, the impact of this new fire service will be expensive for the state. We have not been given the real cost because I don't think that it has been worked out yet. This whole process has been done without consultation of either volunteers or staff members. This lack of consultation violates the Volunteer Charter as well as the CFA Act.

It is also hard to get any direct answers to how the process is to be handled, what happens to brigade owned equipment, funds that have been raised and community activities that brigades have prearranged.

We may need to update our fire service, but why split them up? Wouldn't it be more prudent to have one fire service that answers to one Chief Officer and follows one set of SOP's and are trained to one standard as the CFA are now.

The Presumptive Legislation should not be attached to the fire services reform as it is a totally seperate issue. Why should a volunteer, who can have attended many more call outs than a career member be considered less important? Does that make the cancer any less real or any less fatal for the person suffering from it? How can you tell which call caused the cancer and why should a volunteer have to prove it? And why should there be a time limit for the volunteers? Cancer doesn't own a watch or a calendar.

As a cancer survivor, I could not tell you what triggered my cancer or when, all I know is that I got it. Let us make it fair for all and take that stress out of a firefighters life as well as their families. Afer all they willingly put their lives on the line for their communities, isn't this the least we could do in return as a state?

Joan McGrath



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2017

FIRE AWARENESS AWARDS

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