

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Colin Lynch [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 9:30 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission to fire services bill.
Attachments: Submission For CFA.docx

To; Department of the Legislative Council,

Fire Services Bill Select Committee.

Dear Members,

As a captain of a rural fire brigade for around forty years I feel insulted and assaulted by the way C.F.A. Volunteers have been treated by the Victorian Government over the last year or more. Everyone who has shown some possibility of speaking realistically with some knowledge about volunteers has been displaced and replaced with someone who is either ignorant or unwilling to look outside the required position that is expected of them. Then we get deals made to attach a second rate (for volunteers) Presumptive legislation to an EBA in an attempt to pass it.

I hope that you will open your minds to the realities that are imminent in our Fire service that has been among the worlds best in an area that is in one of the worlds most dangerous.

I have attached a few thoughts that I pulled together as I see them from a Brigade level.

Thank you,

Colin Lynch,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To: Assistant Clerk Committees,
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee,
Parliament House, Spring Street,
East Melbourne

I have been a Volunteer Firefighter for more than 50 years and in that time I have held our paid firefighters in great esteem as they were there to help us, not only to fight fires in a prompt and consistent manner, but to guide us in our administrative duties and also with training, which I gather they often volunteered their time to help us with. They also, in conjunction with some very dedicated volunteers, have been responsible for the incredible advances in equipment, methods and safety training that have occurred over the last 50 years.

Over the last ten years or so, with the increase in numbers of paid firefighters in rural cities we have seen an increasing separation of paid and volunteer forces where some paid firefighters seem to consider themselves superior and are not inclined to use this situation to mentor and support volunteers but maybe see them as a threat to their jobs and they would rather not work with them.

When we have Stations that are fully manned with paid staff there is no real incentive for people to volunteer as they do not have many opportunities to be involved in real action and gain worthwhile experience. This means that in a few years we will be in a position where we have a lot less surge capacity for the times when we have catastrophic conditions as the paid guys will be expected to remain to protect their designated area and experienced volunteers will not be available to go to affected areas or to cover their local area. This process is already under way and we should be working to pull our forces together, not tear them apart on a whim with no consultation and no sign of good governance.

There is now a lot of sentiment amongst rural members to opt out of the CFA and just provide and use their own equipment. This would take us back more than seventy years and leave no real surge capacity and very little training and ultimately to a loss of lives.

Among other things, I have been trained in incident control and AIMS and understand how we can work together with other agencies, each carrying out our own special rolls. If the fire service was to be split it would have to be a complete split and not a split where the paid firefighters would eventually infiltrate The Authority, which they will under present conditions, and control everyone. They can then feather their own nests by burdening ratepayers with increasing Fire Service Levies. This is governance out of control...or no governance.

The Authority needs to be (as a body) independent. It needs strong leadership and representatives from Rural, City and Urban fire services as well as from the communities they serve.

At present we are headed for an Authority controlled by its own employees!!!!

This is unacceptable, in my opinion.

As a firefighter I will be ready to work with others to keep our people safe. The problem I see is that the incentive, especially for city and town people, to become volunteers is being diminished and this is where many of our volunteers come from. There is less chance of including volunteers when we have what I see as separated stations. (Called Integrated Stations)

Yours Faithfully,

Colin Lynch.

Framlingham Rural Fire Brigade