

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 11:18 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire Services Bill Submission

To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a submission to the Fire Services Bill Select Committee. I am currently an officer in a volunteer CFA fire brigade in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Please see my comments below on each of the terms of reference:

**Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria**

The proposed restructure of the fire services in Victoria will have a significant adverse impact on for service delivery in Victoria, and here are the main reasons why:

- Currently CFA integrated stations already cover areas outside of MFB boundaries and do a great job. How will this improve delivery just by changing a logo on their truck and uniform?
- Changes in boundary are irrelevant as CFA already have integrated stations in growing out suburbs (Rowville, Pakenham, Springvale, etc). They also have plans for more integrated stations in growing areas. What will change from this direction by creating FRV? It's already happening.
- The creation of FRV merely encourages a further divide between career and volunteer firefighters. FRV appliances turn out, regularly requesting second and third CFA appliances to remain in station as they are not required. Volunteers need to be used and require continual hands on experience to maintain their skills. If these skills are not being used and regularly do not attend callouts, they start to question their value of turning out and will look to other forms of supporting the local community.
- Eventually, volunteers will stop turning out altogether. Volunteer numbers will drop (and is happening currently) which will cause significant issues when they are required. Their on the job experience is weakened and will be less effective as they once were when they turning out more regularly. Less volunteers means less surge capacity, or will have less experienced volunteers on hand increasing. This also includes surge capacity for urban jobs - who will backfill integrated stations when they are at a large job in MFB boundaries? Also with reduced volunteers, there may be instances where CFA brigades may not be able to get a truck out the door because they are so low on member numbers.
- How will brigades in the outer suburbs attract new members, demand many hours/days/weeks of training to hardly be used and build their on the job skills?
- The restructure does not address the issue of daytime manning in many locations in Victoria. If there was a flexible model across CFA where career firefighters could work a daytime shift only, and volunteers turn out in the evenings/early hours of the morning - this is the ideal solution.
- It has been quoted that the cost for Victorian fire brigades to put out a fire is nearly double that of a NSW fire. As a tax payer, why am I paying extra for the same service?
- CFA model is seen as a benchmark structure around the world. NZ Fire service have also recently changed their model to be closer to CFA - integrated model.

**Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery**

The proposed restructure of the fire services in Victoria will have a significant adverse impact on volunteer engagement and delivery in Victoria, and here are the main reasons why:

- The creation of FRV merely encourages a further divide between career and volunteer firefighters. FRV appliances turn out, regularly requesting second and third CFA appliances to remain in station as they are not required. Volunteers need to be used and require continual hands on experience to maintain their skills. If these skills are not being used and regularly do not attend callouts, they start to question their value of turning out and will look to other forms of supporting the local community. When a bad fire season takes place, how can we expect volunteers to turn out and be at their optimal level of performance when their work rate and experience during the year may have decreased by half.
- Eventually, volunteers will stop turning out altogether. Volunteer numbers will drop which will cause significant issues when they are required. There on the job experience is weakened and will be less effective

as they once were when they turning out more regularly. I know myself - if my station becomes a co-located FRV station and a CFA station, I am unlikely to continue. A heavy reduction in callouts means I would question why i was doing this. Eventually my departure also means less time spent on community safety, fundraising, new member recruitment will just disappear with my departure, and others.

- Less volunteers means less surge capacity, or will have less experienced volunteers on hand increasing. This also includes surge capacity for urban jobs - who will backfill integrated stations when they are at a large job in MFB boundaries? Also with reduced volunteers, there may be instances where CFA brigades may not be able to get a truck out the door because they are so low on member numbers.
- The reduction in volunteers adds safety risks in every job - less people, increase in danger to each other. Instead of turning out with a crew of 4, it may only be one or two.
- Morale is already at an all time low. I can't see how a divide will improve morale.
- CFA middle management having to go across to FRV, then come back on contract continues to expand the reach union members within the CFA. If CFA is to become a volunteer only organization, why again do union members still have an impact in CFA's service delivery?

## Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision

- The proposed restructure of the fire services in Victoria will add significant and unnecessary cost.
- It has been quoted that the cost for Victorian fire brigades to put out a fire is nearly double that of a NSW fire. As a tax payer, why am I paying extra for the same service?
- Cost of changing over uniforms, trucks, stations, - significant cost and immediate.
- After volunteer numbers start to decline, the ability of volunteer brigades to service their community declines leading to an increased chance that and FRV station will be setup. Therefore further increasing the cost ongoing. How many FRV stations will be required across the state because volunteer performance declines as a result of everything above.
- What will the cost be to put of major fires which traditionally have been covered by in most part volunteers, now would have to have more career firefighters? I can only assume that penalty rates, overtime, further entitlements would be a massive cost to the Victorian public. Definitely greater than it needs to be if time, money and effort is spent on enhancing volunteer resources and capabilities.

## Underlying policy rationale

- THE CFA Volunteer charter dictates that the government must consult with the CFA before any changes. To date, there has been no consultation. Purely a decision that has been made with town hall meetings being held "telling" everyone what the changes will be. This is not consultation.

I would appreciate it if my name could be kept confidential

Regards,

