

To the Parliamentary Select Committee

### **Fire Services Legislation Reform Bill**

If the Fire Services Legislation currently before the select committee is passed it will severely damage and break up the C.F.A. (Our surge capacity will be gone in a year or two as volunteers are replaced by the U.F.U. paid people) The roles of the regional officers would be reversed to what they are now. Currently all paid staff are there to assist the volunteers. Under the Legislation they are made in charge. We will not be servants or lap dogs to the V.F.U.

Not only is it the Legislation but the M.F.B. is wiped out and the E.B.A. they have refused to implement will be implemented within weeks of the Legislation being passed thus giving the U.F.U. control of all the fire services across the state.

If this happens thousands of Volunteers will abandon the C.F.A. My brigade and others will leave the C.F.A. and go back to what we were pre 1945 i.e. Bushfire Brigades or our brigade could fold and not exist. The cost of these changes will be huge. With currently approximately 15,000 volunteers in Suburban Melbourne and 45,000 in regional and rural Victoria. With the new wage rises a paid fire fighter with overtime, work cover and superannuation could cost close to \$200,000 each.

The fire services is paid for by our Fire Services Levy which is now part of the council rates. I currently have two fire trucks which I register, insure and maintain yet I still pay the Fire Services Levy. If the Legislation is passed the levy will multiply by 2,3, or 5 times.

The reason for the Legislation has nothing to do with public safety. Daniel Andrews is trying to repay the U.F.U. for their intimidation of voters at the last Victorian election to help get him elected. I ask what has the C.F.A. done wrong to deserve the treatment handed to our Board, CEO, Chief Officer and others sacked for not being in this rotten union.

I fear if this Legislation is passed it will put Victorians at risk by reducing our capacity to attend road accidents, house fires, bush fires and strike teams. At the end of the day it is the volunteers who put the fires out.

I sincerely hope you don't support this destructive, divisive Legislation that will partly if not totally destroy the C.F.A.

I would like to address the committee as a witness if the opportunity is available through the public hearings.

Yours sincerely

Robert D. Cooke

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