

Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau AM,  
Governor of Victoria



Maryborough  
Fire Brigade



4<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Fire Services Bill Select Committee  
Emailed to: [LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au)

#### Submission for consideration RE: Fire Services Review

This submission is being made by the Captain, Officers and members of the Maryborough Fire Brigade. We acknowledge that many of our members will lodge individual submissions and would like to provide a submission that reflects the concerns of our brigade as a whole.

We would also welcome the opportunity to speak directly to the committee to further discuss our concerns.

The key points we would like to raise are as follows:

- **Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire services Legislation Amendment (reform) Bill 2017 being listed as a joint amendment.** We feel that that these two very complex issues should be listed individually. These issues in their nature involve detailed analysis and understanding. It is also very likely to expect whilst most will support the presumptive rights compensation bill as a matter of basic human rights, that needs to be implemented immediately, the more complex issues relating to the fire services reform and the complete lack of detail and consultation should be heavily questioned before being voted on. **We call on the select committee at the very least to separate these two issues from the one Bill.**
- **Lack of consultation.** The governments lack of consultation with all affected parties is one of our major concerns and in our opinion, has led us to the situation we now find ourselves in where communication is disjointed and messaging is inconsistent. **We ask that the committee return to government with a clear message that until genuine consultation occurs the Bill will not be put before parliament for approval.**
- The expectation that brigades/members should trust that the changes proposed in the fire services review will not reduce the level of funding and support we currently receive is impossible to achieve due to the non-existent consultation. Without providing the 'detail' in what the reform will deliver **we are unable to make informed decisions and provide our feedback on that informed position.** At the moment, we are asked to 'trust' the government' when they say this will improve things for volunteers when we are provided with little to no detail on how this will be achieved. Providing a cash payment of one hundred million dollars does not answer our questions.
- **Funding.** We need to understand how the fire services levy will be split between the two agencies. We also need to have an agreement ongoing not just for the next couple of years. The other thing **we are calling for is full disclosure of a cost analysis.** Details for the reform activities and initial split and then the ongoing funding models moving forward. This is key for all Victorians as ultimately the Victorian public will be paying for the changes moving forward.



- **Options Analysis** – We expect that there has been some sort of business process which included an options analysis of how the government would like to proceed in implementing the fire services reform. **This options analysis should be made available as part of the consultation process.** Ideally the fire services review process would have unfolded with the options analysis and preferred option being used as the basis for consultation. **We are calling on the government to go back to this stage of the review and include all affected organisations and members in this consultation with all the information required to make an informed decision.**
- **Secondment** – we question the ability to effectively implement a structure that relies on secondment activities to ensure the functionality of the CFA. **There are numerous issues that need to be considered, consulted on and better communicated before we support this structure and the proposed reforms.** This includes:
  - The ability for the Chief Officer direct and discipline seconded FRV staff
  - The continued issues relating to FRV staff EBA and UFU direction
  - The continued inequity (post the Fire Services Reform implementation) of staff conditions of employment between the current CFA PTA staff and the FRV operational staff
  - Inability to consider lateral entry outside FRV. This is an enormous long-standing issue that could be addressed through the fire services reform if the options analysis was consulted. This would enable the opportunity for volunteers to provide advice and insight into the long-standing issues affecting rural and remote areas of Victoria with long-standing Operational and Training Instructor vacancies.

As we are aware that the select committee will be receiving many submissions similar to ours during this consultation we have aimed to keep our concerns high level in its nature. We can only assume that the committee is receiving many other submissions of a similar nature.

As mentioned at the beginning of our submission we would welcome the opportunity to speak directly with members of the select committee to provide detail relating to these concerns/issues. Please contact me on [REDACTED] to discuss this opportunity further.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views and concerns of the Maryborough Fire Brigade relating to the proposed Fire Services Review.

Yours Sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Captain Darryl Wagstaff AFSM  
Maryborough Fire Brigade