

**Prue Purdey**

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**From:** Lita Admin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 4:58 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire services bill 06-07-17

The Secretary,

Submission re Fire Services Bill.

I wish to make the following submission to the Select Committee. I am a CFA volunteer of forty years service, at all levels of fire management. Including Incident Management roles in some of Victoria's largest fire events in the past 20 years.

My first reaction to this divisive and poorly thought out legislation is the mere fact of combining such a vital issue as presumptive legislation with the radical reform of Victorian fire Services is disgraceful. To use the health of fire fighters career and volunteer as a form of blackmail to get an EBA passed is an act of cynical political bastardry.

- Please reject this legislation as it is currently presented.
- Please exclude the presumptive legislation parts of the proposed legislation and let the Parliament deal with this separately.
- Please appreciate that as a volunteer I have been offered a second class place in the protection of the legislation which is wrongly purported to be the same as the Queensland model.

The legislation to create FRV is poorly thought out for its long term consequences. It is blatantly an ill conceived effort to put an EBA in place.

There is no evidence that has been provided other than illusionary government commentary that gives any credence to the claim that this reform has been recommended previously. The legislation which promotes a radical change to the states emergency response needs careful consideration and planning, none of which seems to have been applied.

Members of Parliament should understand clearly this move will result in,

- Dislocation of urban fire fighters and with a diminished role will mean in some areas that community safety may be reduced not enhanced.
- With the removal of paid fire fighters it will remove the flexibility of the CFA and/ or FRU to utilise the main benefits of integration and the ability to transition effectively to staffing of volunteer sectors if and when required
- There is no doubt there is significant scope within the legislation for the government to replace many more volunteer brigades without real scrutiny or justification in the medium term. The powers of the minister to direct is unhealthy.

The CFA will not have autonomy in their management and with the inevitable turnover in middle management personnel there will be little volunteer understanding of the staff supplied by FRV in the future to accommodate volunteer culture and needs.

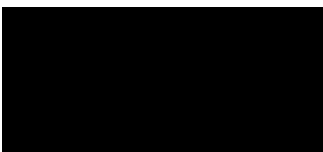
- Already I am being informed by my brigade members they will do what they can for their local area but don't ask them to provide surge capacity in strike teams for major incidents outside that area. Can the State afford to gamble on its community safety
- The lack of consultation other than briefings from senior management has alienated many of the grass root volunteers. This alienation and mistrust will linger for many years.

The main concern is that it is reform based upon ideology rather than modernisation and improvement of services in a measured and considered way, is the cost to the state of trying to implement this so called reform. The minister has made a great show of the \$100 million being put up. \$54 Million for volunteer development and \$46 Million for infrastructure. The real fact is that this amount of money is a pathetic amount relative to what is required in infrastructure and equipment alone. I urge the committee to ensure that independent costing is sought for these proposals. In my district alone it is estimated that \$12-15 million is required to replace out dated 25-30 year old tankers and pumpers along with just basic upgrades of inadequate stations. It is conceivable that just relocating/ collating of the displaced volunteers of the identified integrated brigades may well soak up much of this funding. Also contrary to legislative requirements of consultation there is no involvement by VFBV to consider the best use of the \$50+ Million to assist volunteers.

There is no doubt that there are real opportunities to modernise and reform fire services to maximise community safety but this is a poorly planned and uncosted attempt which should be rejected outright. By all means have a real discussion about the risks and options that are feasible and cost effective. There needs to be an independent review into reform that gets rid of the misinformation and half truths that has been a prominent part of this Government debate and agenda.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views

Yours Sincerely,



A.J. Cusack AFSM  
CFA Captain  
Mumbannar, VIC