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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 10:21 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Breakup of CFA

Parliamentary Select Committee Fire Service Bill

To Whom it may Concern

We live in interesting times.

Never in my experience as a volunteer for 36 years, has there been such a systematic dismantling of organization such has occurred to the CFA.

I write to you as Captain of the Willaura Fire Brigade. This brigade is the largest in District 16, an area of some 550 square kilometers. We have some 150 registered active members and have significant private fire fighting resources within the brigade.

The CFA was once the best volunteer organizations in the world with a united aim of protecting the community against the threat of fire. In the period of the past 2 years there has been a systematic dismantling of this organization and yet against all the advice from those at its very heart, this government has seen fit to reject anything that goes against its agenda. Why would anyone within such an organization dare to voice an opinion that goes against the status quo?

For a government to sack the Board, the CEO and the Minister and for 3 Chief Officers to resign in the interim period and the resignation of 2 CEOs in a similar time frame must tell us about its true intentions. This is a true indicator of the lack of political stability within the organization. For the information that continues to be trotted out by the current CEO at the head of the CFA, it must be said is at least mildly concerning.

How can somebody that has been a volunteer in such an organization believe that the government has our true interests at heart?

Can the government guarantee the CFA will be free from political interference?

How will the organization be able to cope on extreme days when it has previously relied on the outer Melbourne Districts to provide surge capacity?

How will the CFA attract staff that will support the interests of volunteers in areas such as training and operations particularly in the more remote 'less attractive' areas of the state? How will the 'revolving door' of high staff turnover be addressed in these areas?

Will the organization have a truly independent Board and CEO that can operate without feeling they are operating in the shadow of another agenda whilst showing empathy to volunteers?

What lays in the future for the CFA and how will it take shape as an organization? Will it continue to be sufficiently funded? Does anybody know? Has anyone been asked?

These are questions that need answers. We don't need political 'spin'.

To regain the trust of volunteers will require a complete rethink of the direction in which fire fighting is being conducted. Fire is a dynamic thing that requires quick decisive decision making that is supported at a local level. It is not a central, self serving bureaucracy that feeds on itself.

Yours Faithfully

Anthony Heard

Captain Willaura Fire Brigade