



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
Fire Services Bill Select Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Select Committee presents report on fire services bill

The Legislative Council Select Committee on Fire Services has today presented its final report into the proposed restructure of the Country Fire Authority and Metropolitan Fire Brigade as proposed in the *Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017*.

The Select Committee has recommended that the Bill should be withdrawn, or rejected by the Legislative Council.

The Select Committee has also recommended that Part 2 of the Bill, relating to firefighters' presumptive rights compensation, should be reintroduced to Parliament as a standalone Bill to be considered on its merits.

In total, the Select Committee has made ten findings and ten recommendations.

"We have made these recommendations because of the lack of certainty around implementation, operations, and funding under the proposed restructure; the failure to undertake consultation; and, the consequential polarisation of fire services staff and volunteers," said Select Committee Chairman, Gordon Rich-Phillips.

The Select Committee's recommendations emphasise the importance of consultation in reform of the fire services.

It has called on the Government to ensure compliance with its consultation obligations under the Volunteer Charter and the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* prior to proceeding with any further reform of the fire services.

The Select Committee has also recommended that the Government undertake meaningful and balanced consultation with Emergency Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, staff and volunteer representatives prior to proposing any further reform of the fire services.

Other recommendations focus on employment of CFA staff and funding arrangements for the fire services.

Almost 1,900 submissions were accepted by the Select Committee and public hearings were held in Melbourne and across regional Victoria.

"The Select Committee is grateful to all the firefighters and other community members who contributed their views to this inquiry," Mr Rich-Phillips said.

"The evidence we received has shown the depth of feeling on these issues in the community."

The report is available from the Select Committee's [website](#).

Media comment

Select Committee Chairman, Gordon Rich-Phillips 03 9794 7667

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