



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



MEDIA RELEASE

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Stuart Grimley to Support CFA

Following six long years of debate in Victorian Parliament regarding controversial changes to Victoria's fire services, Stuart Grimley's vote against the Bill will go towards protecting the CFA volunteers.

Mr Grimley - alongside fellow Derryn Hinch's Justice Party MP and Member for Northern Victoria Tania Maxwell - will have the final votes in the Legislative Council (LC) of the Fire Services Bill which has divided personnel in our emergency services for more than a decade.

He expressed frustration at the Bill which has two major conflicting components - the establishment of 'Fire Rescue Victoria' (FRV) which would contentiously combine both the CFA and MFB (Metropolitan Fire Brigade); and the Presumptive Legislation to enable firefighters - both volunteer and paid - access to cancer compensation however this Legislation in its current form discriminates between paid and volunteer CFA volunteers in access to compensation.

Similarly to some crossbench MPs in the Upper House, Mr Grimley would support the latter with amendments but has issues with the establishment of FRV and the effects this would have on the tens-of-thousands of CFA Volunteers. Mr Grimley's office has been overwhelmed by public contact and enquiry regarding the future of the CFA as a result of this Bill.

If passed, most of the CFA's volunteers would be required to respond to fires at the request of a new body called 'Fire Rescue Victoria' (FRV). The existing integrated CFA facilities would be rebranded as FRV facilities and the CFA volunteers would be 'co-located' with career firefighters.

There are also still considerable concerns about who will determine CFA resourcing, funding and boundaries going forward. There has also been no operational modelling or business case to support this piece of legislation.

Mr Grimley has since met with several stakeholders and the major parties for briefing to ensure his vote is cast with full understanding of the Bill.

The destiny of the *Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill* now rests with the 11-member crossbench in the Upper House.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"We will not abandon our volunteers who make up the fabric of our regional communities. Derryn Hinch's Justice Party has a long history of standing beside the CFA and its volunteers.

It is no coincidence that so many disillusioned volunteers have quit out of frustration in recent times.

It is staggering that the State Government is pursuing these changes without any published business case or operational modelling.

I'm confused as to why funding for fire related cancer treatment has been attached to a Bill which restructures the CFA. The crossbench has repeatedly asked for the Government to separate this Bill but they have refused our request."

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