



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

## MEDIA RELEASE



Wednesday 15 January 2020

### **Call to Review CFA Funding Arrangement for Equipment**

Stuart Grimley MP, Member for Western Victoria, is calling on the Andrews Government to review its requirement for Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer brigades to fundraise for their own equipment, calling it “unfair and a disadvantage to regional and rural communities”.

Volunteer brigades are currently required to contribute \$1 for every \$2 of funding from the State Government under the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP). Mr Grimley said that it was another example of the inequity between metropolitan and regional/rural areas.

Mr Grimley also said given the severity of the current fire season, the VESEP arrangement should be addressed as a matter of urgency and separate to the independent investigation into the fire season which won't be handed down for more than six months.

Further, given Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) will be established in mid-2020, it is also urgent that the CFA (which will then be a volunteer-only organisation) is properly funded without waiting for grants processes or arduous fundraising to take place.

Despite the long history of dispute between the major parties and the operation of Victoria's fire services, Mr Grimley is asking the State Government to take the politics out of emergency management and strongly consider this proposal.

Whilst the premise of being a volunteer is that time is given up without payment, Mr Grimley firmly believes these volunteers should at the very least have the equipment needed to volunteer effectively.

Mr Grimley and his DHJP colleague Tania Maxwell (Northern Victorian MP) supported the CFA by voting against the Fire Services Bill which dismantled the CFA and created FRV in 2019.

#### **Quotes attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:**

“Rural and regional areas require fire services to be well equipped just as much as Melbourne's fire crews do.

Already there is inequity through the establishment of the CFA as a volunteer-only organisation; the least we can do as a state is fund the equipment our volunteers use.

This shouldn't discourage fundraising for volunteer brigades but it should mean vital equipment and infrastructure – and ultimately community safety – doesn't ride on the back of the success of sausage sizzles and highway collections.

Fire seasons are only going to get worse and our regional and rural communities need to be prepared... this includes with adequate equipment.

You wouldn't expect police to fundraise for capsicum spray and divvy vans or for paramedics to fundraise for medications, IV drips and ambulance vans.”