



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



Tuesday 30 June, 2020

Concerns for the CFA as they become Volunteer-Only

Stuart Grimley MP is concerned about the support the CFA is receiving as they become a volunteer-only organisation as of this Wednesday 1 July.

The fire services reform Bill which passed in 2019 was supposed to reform Victoria's fire services for the better, but Mr Grimley said "a lack of consultation with CFA members" specifically over the past 12 months has made them not only feel like "second-class citizens" but feel purposely excluded from discussions.

After visiting many CFA stations – some in person and others via Zoom due to COVID-19 – Mr Grimley says it has become evident that CFA volunteers haven't been consulted nearly as much as was promised.

This recent bushfire season further highlighted the need for a well-synchronized fire service, but instead career and volunteer firefighters are even more confused about their positions from July 1 onwards (when the legislation comes into effect).

Mr Grimley reflected on the frustrations of the State Government refusing to provide a business case or any operational modelling which justified the changes to the CFA in the lead up to the Bill being debated, which led him to oppose the Bill.

Mr Grimley also noted concern that recent promotion and communications by the State Government for changes to fire services had no mention of the CFA at all.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"Despite reassurances from the Government that there would be no disadvantage or hierarchy of our fire services, it seems our CFA members are being treated like second-class citizens.

I'll be watching and listening closely from July 1 to see how our CFA volunteers are coping with the implementation of Fire Rescue Victoria.

I told CFA volunteers face-to-face last year that I would support them by voting down the political football that was the Fire Services Bill and here we are 12 months on, asking for more clarity just days before FRV kicks off.

It's still disheartening to remember some crossbench MPs voting for the Bill that made the CFA a volunteer-only organisation."

Office of Stuart Grimley Media Contact:

Olivia Nicholls

0459 419 755

olivia.nicholls@parliament.vic.gov.au