



**The Country Fire Service
Volunteers Association**
"Representing the interests of CFS Members"

**Working together with
CFS REGIONAL
COMMITTEES**

BULLETIN

Sector Reform Update

2 February 2015

Minister Piccolo and the Premier continue to ignore the CFSVA concerns in relation to Sector Reform, instead Minister Piccolo is choosing to surround himself with small minority groups rather than **listening to the voice of the majority of volunteers.**

The CFSVA is not opposed to change and is fully supportive of justified change that will improve the ability of volunteers to continuing providing a high standard of emergency responses to 90% of South Australia.

The CFSVA is merely asking Government to delay appointing a Commissioner until a number of questions are answered, as we believe that CFS volunteers and the public of South Australia have a right to a business plan; have a right to see where efficiencies can be found; have a right to know how sector reform will improve service delivery throughout South Australia; have a right to know how equity for all firefighters, regardless of whether volunteer or paid will be achieved and most importantly; have a right to know that South Australian communities can be guaranteed the same high level of response, protection and support during future emergencies.

One of the key points that the CFSVA made clear in its initial presentation to the Minister was that volunteers would not accept change for the sake of change – unfortunately this is exactly what we are seeing as the Minister refuses to provide a business plan and continues to appointment a Commissioner.

The Minister, during a number of presentations stated that should the benefits of sector reform not be apparent then sector reform would **NOT** proceed. **NO** benefits have been proven, however, although reminded of his statement, Minister Piccolo continues along this potentially disastrous path.

The reform office latest bulletin claims a “series of agreements” which the CFSVA states are not agreements, but decisions made by the Minister irrespective of the consultation process.

The appointment of a Commissioner:

Minister Piccolo raised the concept, which was never open for discussion as it was made clear by the Minister from the start that a Commissioner would be appointed regardless. This has always been a “Captain’s call”.

Minister Piccolo states that notwithstanding the current consultation process once the Commissioner is appointed the Commissioner will have the power to bring forward his /her own changes. This, given the lack of a business plan removes the ability for public scrutiny, and makes a farce of the consultation process, as once appointed the Commissioner will have the ability to override any and all decisions without notice or consultation.

The Minister indicates that CFS operations will not be impacted by the sector reform and there will be no change at regional level, yet in an interview two weeks ago the Minister is quoted as saying “the first phase would include the appointment of a Commissioner, while the second phase would focus on operational aspects that would need legislative change.”

Minister Piccolo states that CFS will retain its culture, yet is in the process of creating a large bureaucracy totally detached from CFS operations with its own identity and uniform.

Volunteer Charter:

The CFSVA has continually lobbied over a number of years for the volunteer charter to be enshrined in legislation and retains this position. The Minister insists that the Volunteer Charter will be in regulation.

The difference between legislation as opposed to regulation is that regulations are reviewed and amended every 5 years by bureaucrats whilst legislation can only be changed through amendments to legislation which must be supported by Parliament.

The CFSVA has **NOT** agreed to the volunteer charter in regulation, but continues to insist that it **MUST** be in legislation.

Minister Piccolo speaks of creating equity – what exactly does he mean?

Equity for all CFS stations to have as a minimum toilet facilities or equity to MFS standards;

Equity for volunteers to have a second set of PPC or equity to MFS standards;

Equity for volunteers and CFS staff to equally compete for positions on merit based or equity based on the MFS recruitment process.

Why does a strong union like the UFU, with close links to the Weatherill Government remain silent throughout the consultation process?

The UFU in their in-house publications continually state that the reform will result in a “One Fire Service Model” yet provide no submission to the Minister to support this position.

Why is the UFU not openly promoting its position and lobbying hard for its members?

Do they know something we don't?

The CFSVA continues to say “**NO to a One Fire Service Model**”.

The CFSVA is extremely concerned that South Australia is expected to go blindly along this path of sector reform on a “**trust**” basis.

Are you are prepared to trust Minister Piccolo and Premier Weatherill?

Are you prepared to wait for a Commissioner to be appointed; a Commissioner appointed by Minister Piccolo; a Commissioner with the power to make changes outside of the consultation process?

If this process is as transparent and we are lead to believe then why is the Minister not responding to our genuine concerns, and why in fact is the process being fast tracked?

Minister Piccolo must provide a business plan; must provide justification; and must allow public scrutiny.

Are you truly prepared to blindly trust the Weatherill Government with the future of emergency services in South Australia while so many questions remain unanswered?

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