



Cameron McPherson

04/07/2017 02:21 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Committee Submission Re. Fire  
Services Reforms

1 attachment



SUBMISSION.docx

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Cameron McPherson and I am a fire fighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade .  
Please find attached my submission to the Select Committee for Fire Services Reform .

Yours Sincerely,

Cam McPherson

[Redacted signature]

**Re: Inquiry into the firefighter's presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Cameron McPherson and I am a level two fire fighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I have worked with the MFB for eighteen months and I love the opportunity to serve the community that this career provides me. I was previously employed as an electrician in the south eastern suburbs for eight years before becoming a fire fighter.

I live in Brunswick and I work in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, predominantly at the Pascoe Vale fire station on Gaffney Street. I grew up in the south eastern suburb of Rowville, which is the family home where my Mother still lives. I also have a brother living with his wife in Croydon Hills.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed changes to the fire services, including the addition of presumptive rights legislation. I would like my submission to be held in confidence, though I am extremely grateful to be given the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Fire fighters have a much higher incidence of certain types of cancer and other diseases than the general population. Although protective measures such as breathing apparatus have become much more widespread, these illnesses are still rife in the fire services. It is of vital importance to my colleagues, my friends, my family and myself that fire fighters be provided with presumptive legislation to help us through an extremely tough diagnosis that is so much more likely to happen to us than to others.

I want to stress that the role of volunteers in our community is essential and that they play an important part in protecting Victorians from the threat of fire and other accidents and disasters. Though they do a great job, they cannot be expected to be constantly on call or to be trained to the same standard as career fire fighters. On many occasions, volunteers cannot respond to emergencies due to other commitments like work and family. Added to this, Victoria's vast population growth has seen areas previously defined as 'country' become much more densely populated. It is essential for the safety of all Victorians that a population/risk based matrix be put into place, where the protection that volunteers alone can provide is deemed as insufficient and career fire fighters are required to be on call. There will be no change to the role volunteer fire fighters play in protecting Victorians based on these reforms, being critical to surge capacity, yet the community will be even safer knowing they have staff in station ready to turn out within ninety seconds.

The proposed reforms are essential in making Victoria's fire services a world class model that will move from an out-dated 1950's system into a 21<sup>st</sup> century full rescue service. All career fire fighters will be provided the same training and will

become a completely interoperable model under the banner of Fire Rescue Victoria. Their services – including Emergency Medical Response (not provided by volunteer brigades) – will be seamless. This will allow the CFA to return to the fully volunteer organisation that it was intended to be, designed to protect country Victoria. These volunteers will still be provided training by Fire Rescue Victoria's career fire fighters around the clock. These volunteers will still be utilised to protect the community through surge capacity. These volunteers will still be given the respect they deserve from career fire fighters and the community as a whole.

On a personal note, members of my family including my mother and brother live just outside the current fire services boundary. Should these changes come into effect, I will feel safe in the knowledge that my mother and future nieces and nephews are protected through a career fire service, which provides Emergency Medical Response and will be on the road within ninety seconds of being notified.

These reforms are not about who is protecting the community. This is not a political football to be slung about in parliament and in the media. This is about which fire service model provides the best protection for Victorians - A volunteer service that though critical in protecting country Victoria simply cannot guarantee turning out, or a professional fire service that will turn out within ninety seconds.

Yours sincerely,

Fire Fighter Cam McPherson

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