



**Chris Watt** [REDACTED]

07/07/2017 10:28 AM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF,

[REDACTED]  
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cc

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Subject Submission to Fire Services Bill Select  
Committee

1 attachment



Christopher Watt submission.pdf

Please accept the attached PDF from Christopher Watt

Christopher Watt

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7 July 2017

Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Via email: [consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au)

Dear Fire Services Bill Select Committee Members,

**Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services  
Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017**

I am a retired Assistant Chief Fire Officer (**ACFO**), with the Metropolitan Fire and  
Emergency Services Board (**MFB**).

I was employed by the MFB for over 35 years and held the rank of ACFO. My position was  
that of Director of Special Operations.

I currently live in rural Victoria and have input into my local community of Jamieson.

I hold the following specialist membership/awards/qualifications:

- Masters Degree in Management
- Member Institute of Fire Engineers
- Completed Command Program at UK Morton on Marsh Fire College
- Australian Fire Service Medal (for work in Dangerous Goods)
- Long Service and Good conduct medal
- National Medal and two clasps

When I was Director of Special Operations, my responsibilities covered HAZMAT, Emergency Medical Response, Urban Search and Rescue, Rope Rescue (HART) and Marine Response. These disciplines have a critical reliance upon rescue techniques and very technical rescue equipment and require ongoing training and development to ensure that the skills are maintained.

Throughout my career I was consistently frustrated by two levels of service provided to the community, especially in similar urban environments. This inequitable service not only applied to the fire and medical response, but more importantly to the levels of fire protection within the built and industrial environments. As the Director of Dangerous Goods in my final years, I was frustrated by reduced levels of fire safety being provided in some areas of the state. Furthermore, I hold the view that high density urban populations, including communities not regarded as inner metropolitan, should receive improved response times and the most advanced level of competence available in Victoria. The proposed legislation reform should deliver better, not lower, standards of protection.

I believe that the reform will enable career firefighters, including firefighters in specialist areas, the ability to improve protection to the community through increased common standards, equipment and training.

I strongly advocate for a single career fire service and believe Fire Rescue Victoria will be a significant improvement on the current system. This new system will ensure that like communities will receive like services. It will also allow for more in the community to be protected by the Fire Services involvement in Emergency Medical Response.

As a committed community member in a rural community I fully understand the importance of the CFA volunteers because they are the fabric of many rural communities. My understanding of the legislation is that it will benefit volunteers by providing greater support for them with far more independence and capability to manage their own affairs, without industrial disputation.

In conclusion, I strongly endorse the proposed legislation for the creation of Fire Rescue Victoria and equally as important I support the presumptive compensation for certain cancers,

to ensure that the number of Fire fighters and families that I have seen suffer through the effects of the rigours of fighting fires are properly looked after.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Watt, AFSM