



06/07/2017 08:40 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject submission to inquirey into firefighters
presumptive rights compensation and
fire services legislation amendment
reform bill 2017

1 attachment



SUBMISSION..doc

Please find attached my submission to fire services amendment reform bill 2017.
I would appreciate confidential treatment of my submission in relation to name and address.

Kind Regards

Email sent using Optus Webmail

To: LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

Re: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

I am Commander [REDACTED] of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). I am an active serving firefighter with the MFB since July 1989 (28 years). I reside at [REDACTED] and work in the Metropolitan District (MD).

I have read various publications on the proposed Fire Rescue Victoria model. This submission is based on my interpretation and opinion concerning the proposed model and associated positive change.

Educational Qualifications

- Barrington Centre, Executive Consequence Management course 2013
- Victoria University – Graduate Certificate in Applied Management 2011
- NMIT – Cert 4 in Workplace Training and Assessment 2011
- Melbourne University - Diploma of Training and Assessment Systems 2005
- Ballarat University – Advanced Diploma of Business Management 2005
- Swinburne University - Associate Dip. Applied Science- Fire Technology 1994.
- RMIT – Bachelor of Applied Science, Physical Education 1985

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed Victorian fire services reform including legislative changes for the following reasons:

- The current fire services arrangements originated in the 1950s and have remained largely unchanged for the past 60 years whilst the Victorian community has grown and diversified. It is my opinion that the model established 60 years ago is no longer appropriate for the evolving society and physical environment we currently live in.
- Victoria's population is projected to increase by 4.6 million people between now and 2051, with growth concentrated in major regional centres and Melbourne's outer suburbs. These areas are outside the MD, currently serviced by the MFB. If no change occurs, the fire service outside the MD servicing the urban community will be as big or larger than the MFB resulting in significant duplication of services that manage, administer and support the current two services. This is not an efficient use of fire service levy funds and is a poor return for the community.
- The MFB services the MD through a network of 47 stations staffed by career firefighters. However; the urban sprawl has seen large communities expand beyond the MD. It is my opinion that the MD is significantly larger than it was 60 years ago. In addition, major regional centres are the equivalent of the MD in both community and built environments and require an equivalent, integrated fire service.

- 15 of the hottest years on record occurred in the past 16 years. Heatwaves are lengthening fire seasons, and bushfires will likely increase in frequency, intensity and affect more densely populated areas. Similarly extreme weather conditions create widespread community consequences impacting primary residence, livelihoods, critical infrastructure, economy and the environment. FRV would provide value efficiency to the community that would be able to respond better to the changing climactic environment.
- The nature of the emergencies has also changed. Fire services are constantly managing the consequences of emergencies such as: significant structure and non-structure fires; malicious and/or hostile acts; hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incidents; emergency medical response (EMR), including assisting ambulance paramedics during mass casualty incidents, etc. Again, FRV would provide value efficiency to the community that would be able to respond better to the changing emergency response environment.
- It is essential to have sufficient capability and capacity for response to an incident or fire in an urban setting due to the complexity of risks and broad community consequences. This is particularly beneficial in a hostile act environment where malicious acts can lead to significant community and infrastructure impacts. Similarly sufficient and timely backup capability with equivalent skills sets is essential to ensure firefighter and community safety. FRV would provide greater and more efficient capacity and capability.
- Eight different reviews into Victoria's fire services have made recommendations to modernise fire services legislation and to establish a process for reviewing the MD. Historically, a version FRV has been presented many times, now is the time to action this reform.
- A uniform approach to skills, knowledge, resources and response across all firefighting capabilities would be of significant benefit to the Victorian community. However; a cost effective model needs to be established to ensure future sustainability. FRV logically can provide this.
- Similarly, a common state wide approach to fire safety (built environment) and community safety would foster stronger resilience and promote greater efficiencies and a safer built environment.
- I do not believe the proposition to employ all career firefighters in one fire service will have an adverse effect on volunteer turnout or surge capacity, as the state's resources are finite. The FRV model will provide significant efficiencies and the CFA will have an enhanced volunteer community focus.
- The reform areas focus on 35 integrated stations and their primary response areas. These are located in highly urbanised and residential areas with diverse risks. These areas have significant supporting infrastructure that supports livelihoods and economic wellbeing. FRV would provide equal or greater service at a greater level of efficiency.
- These integrated areas would benefit from a permanent fire service presence with targeted response times and specialist capabilities including Emergency Medical Response (EMR).

- I believe the reform benefits volunteers as it supports volunteer recruitment and retention in the CFA. This includes funding for volunteer station upgrades and ongoing resourcing and skills training..

Yours sincerely,

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