



Jason Greaves [REDACTED]

07/07/2017 12:16 AM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission for the Fire Services
reform Committee

Hello,

Please find attached my submission for the Fire Services reform Committee.

Yours Sincerely,
Jason Greaves - Firefighter
Ballarat City Fire Brigade,
[REDACTED]

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Dear Assistant clerk Committees,

Inquiry Into The Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

My name is Jason Greaves and I have been a CFA Volunteer Firefighter for the past 6 years at Ocean Grove Fire Brigade and I have been a CFA Career Firefighter for the past 2 years at Ballarat City Fire Brigade. I am writing to you today in support of the proposed fire services reforms. I believe having both a volunteer and career background gives me a well-rounded perspective on the issues and I welcome the opportunity to provide this submission to the committee.

From the outset I must make the point that my primary concern in this process is providing a service to the community of exceptional standard, a service that is timely and efficient, a service that we can all be proud of and is respected within the wider community. I am sure that my fellow career and volunteer colleagues all share my sentiments in this regard, it's the reason I began this journey and I would hope it is the main reason my volunteer and career colleagues also chose this path.

Throughout the past 6 years I have witnessed significant growth in population and a change in the ways people work. In Ocean grove where I volunteer and live the town has grown significantly in size and population. When I began volunteering in 2011 the local brigade was recruiting people specifically that could turn out during weekdays, I was fortunate to be able to do this at the time due to work commitments. This targeted recruitment of volunteers for weekday turnouts was due to the fact that in recent times many volunteer brigades have struggled to get a truck out the door during the weekday, my personal experience with this in Ocean grove was many times turning up to the station with 1, 2 or 3 others and none of us able to drive the truck, so we did not turn out and would notify Vicfire of our situation, we would then hear the next brigade also unable to turn out for the same reason. This could happen several times and a brigade from 10's of km away may eventually respond, delaying response and potentially putting lives and property at risk. This is in no way the fault of volunteers; it is very hard these days to leave your job to turn out, either due to location of employment or the employer's unwillingness to let you leave. In ocean grove many people work away from town in Geelong or further afield, this affects availability of members, and personally when I was working I was forbidden by my employer to leave to turn out to incidents or to go on strike teams. From an employers perspective this is completely understandable given the tough nature of business today. Since becoming a career firefighter stationed at Ballarat City I have witnessed the same situation occur on many occasions, local brigades will either not respond or turn out with 1 or 2 members. Ballarat's population and property development is booming, suburbs are encroaching quickly into what was once countryside, especially in the cities west and it is unrealistic and unfair to expect local volunteer brigades to respond to all calls with the right skills mix and sufficient personnel. These issues can potentially affect both community and firefighter safety, having a service that can reliably guarantee 7 firefighters are dispatched to an incident within 8 minutes can only be a good thing for the community in highly urbanised areas and growth corridors.

Rationalisation and standardisation of the career staff of the 2 fire services will be a significant win for the community, EMV, management and career firefighters. Having one set of recruitment, training, equipment, procedures and response standards will ensure the services are delivered more efficiently, are more agile, better able to deal with incidents throughout the FRV zone and better

able to serve the people of Victoria. Having all career firefighters under one umbrella will in my opinion foster an environment of greater community engagement, improved working standards and enhanced co-operation within the entire career firefighter service. The proposed changes will allow us to be more proactive and modernise the fire services for future generations. An added benefit of the legislation will be the creation of the independent body to periodically examine boundary requirements and make recommendations based on community needs. This will be a significant gain for the community in terms of being proactive and adding resources to communities when and where it is required in a timely manner.

Finally I have to touch on the affect that the ongoing dispute is having on the health and wellbeing of career firefighters, volunteers and family members of both groups. We all work together in the community and it breaks my heart daily when I hear all the negative comments in the media, on social media and in the community. We are all here to serve the community and it is deeply distressing to me the depth of current negativity and the affect it is having on our organisations and the people within them. Volunteer and Career firefighters want this to end and the proposed reforms will in my and many of my volunteer colleagues opinion do this.

I would like to thank the committee for their time in reading this submission, I know that you will have much to consider over the coming months, with a significant amount of material to deliberate over. I hope you can make an informed decision based on fact and go forward based on what is in the best interests of the community, in my opinion this is supporting the proposed fire services reforms.

Yours Sincerely,

Jason Greaves
Ballarat City Fire Brigade,

[REDACTED]