



[REDACTED]
06/07/2017 02:25 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject FW: Letter of Support

1 attachment



Firefighter Reform.docx

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 1:52 PM
To: 'LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au' <LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Letter of Support

I respectfully request that my personal details such as my name and email address remain confidential with your Committee. Thank you for your attention to this request.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 3:01 PM
To: 'LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au' <LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Subject: Letter of Support

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

RE INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTER'S PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

My name is [REDACTED] aged 61 years, I am retired from the Victoria Police Force having served 41 years and the last 36 years as a Detective attached to the Crime Investigation Unit. I have qualified at a Fire Investigation Course including a Wildfire Course. During my time of service I have attended and investigated numerous fire incidents in association with CFA Firefighters including both Professionals and Volunteers.

I am writing to you to express support of the proposed legislation and amendments that will impact firefighting services in Victoria.

I have mainly resided in rural Victoria but I have also resided for several years in Melbourne and Geelong. I am presently residing in Wodonga and have lived in the region for the past 29 years.

My son is a professional firefighter currently employed by the CFA. I have other relatives, close friends (one being a member on the board of the VFBV) and associates who are either Professional Firefighters or Volunteer Firefighters with the CFA. It is through these associations that I have gathered information and learned of diverse opinions.

It is apparent to me that the Fire Services of Victoria are in desperate need of reform and in particular a change to the MFB/CFA boundaries. It is ridiculous that these boundaries have not been amended in accordance with municipal progression. Quite simply urban growth has far outstripped firefighting capacities. It is common sense that the MFB boundaries be expanded and that those CFA stations effected by the expansion be controlled under the one professional firefighter's banner. The Professional and Volunteer Firefighters should be managed as separate organisations because the criteria for each have vastly different standards. Professional Firefighters maintain their skills with regular training including emergency rescue and medical response. Volunteer Firefighters participate in irregular training and then only to a basic level.

I cannot believe the rhetoric and misinformation that has been disseminated by certain people to deliberately cause disharmony between the Professionals and Volunteers. In late 2016 my wife and I joined our friends and members of the VFBV for dinner. I was disgusted to hear the disdain they had and denigration of Professional Firefighters. The Board Members were very pleased with the number of personnel and CFA fire trucks from across the State that rallied at Parliament House in Melbourne for the 'Hands of the CFA' campaign. They boasted about the fire trucks driving to the rally with lights and warning devices operating even though it was a non-urgent and illegal activity. They seemed to have no consideration of those communities who had depleted or non-existent fire services during the rally campaign. I formed the opinion that the VFBV was a group of self-interested people who had no respect for Professional Firefighters.

It is imperative for densely populated areas such as the Melbourne Metropolitan and Regional Cities to be provided with the best possible fire service and this can only be achieved by establishing Professional firefighting services in those areas. Only Professional Firefighters can respond to an incident with a turnout time of 90 seconds and a sufficient crew. Turnout times are crucial for the safety of the community and protection of property. I have attended numerous building fires in my

role as an Investigator and where the Professional Fire Services have responded the buildings have remained relatively intact, however where the Volunteer Fire Services have responded the buildings have been completely destroyed. Volunteer Firefighters are sadly disadvantaged in that they are usually engaged in some activity away from the Fire Station. It takes considerable time for them to get to the Fire Station and respond with sufficient crew members. Recently the Kiewa Fire Brigade publicly announced that it could not provide an efficient fire service simply because the vast majority of its members worked and/or reside long distances from the Fire Station. I am sure this is indicative of Volunteer Firefighters who are attached to integrated CFA Fire Stations.

The presumptive cancer legislation is very important because I know how a fire in some cases, given the circumstances, can create a toxic situation. Fiskville is another issue where many Professional and Volunteer Firefighters have attended for training. I too have concerns for my health because I have participated in several practical scenarios during my fire investigation courses at Fiskville.

In summary, it is time to modernise the Metropolitan Fire Service by changing the boundaries and managing Professional Firefighters in the one Service. It is time to put aside politics and get on with providing the community a better service for the protection of life and property.

Yours Sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.