

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

1. I am Roy Peterson, Qualified Fire-fighter CFA, I have been an operational employee of CFA since August 22 2011 and have worked at a variety of stations around the state. I have a Heavy Rescue, Emergency Medical Response (EMR), Bronto 42LP and Aerial Pumper qualifications. I wear a National Emergency Medal, a 10 year service medal and have accrued the required time for my 15 year Service medal.

2. I live in Kallista, one of the most bushfire prone areas of the state of Victoria and work in Dandenong, one of the most industrialised and culturally diverse areas of Victoria. Despite how different these 2 areas are, when referring to fire services, both these areas currently fall under the "country area of Victoria."

3. I also volunteer in my community of Kallista, at Kallista-The Patch CFA, in the Dandenong Ranges Fire Brigade Group. I have been a member there since 1/12/2001, as a Junior Member, a volunteer fire-fighter, a volunteer lieutenant, a Junior Leader.

4. I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

Fire Service Delivery

Whilst working as a career fire-fighter I have on numerous occasions responded to calls in areas that rely on volunteer support. On many of these occasions the volunteers have failed to meet their Service Delivery Standards or failed to respond a truck entirely. This puts myself and my crew in danger, as the support we rely on to meet our Standard Operating Procedures to engage in our fire fighting safely does not arrive. On these occasions we often put ourselves in danger and proceed against our procedures and our better judgment for the benefit of the community.

As an active volunteer for the majority of my life I can only see how this change will only improve the fire response to the state of Victoria, in currently integrated response areas and volunteer response areas alike. Specific appliances will be responded to fire calls not just brigades as is current practice, this will guarantee the appropriate resourcing for any particular call. When this is an FRV appliance, it will have guaranteed manning with qualified operators on area/job specific appliances.

All FRV fire fighters will have the same qualifications and training, not a mixed bag that is current practice across urban fire fighters from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and professional Urban Fire fighters from the CFA.

There will be an independent committee that decides fire boundaries and which areas need an enhanced fire service, and take the politics out of these decisions. It will not be down to the local political promising a brigade a new fire station if they all vote for him or her anymore. It will be a direct system to alleviate these issues to provide the enhanced fire coverage to the areas that need them most.

Surge capacity will not be affected, as a current volunteer and staff member not one volunteer I have spoken to throughout the last 12 months has expressed their plan to leave the CFA at this time. Surge capacity is already dwindling as number of active volunteers is declining and the average age of volunteers is ever increasing. The focus should be on acquiring new CFA volunteers now so they are available in the years to come, in the meantime, the ever increasing work force of FRV will, as they always have been, as MFB and CFA professional fire fighters, be able to respond across the state.

5. Below are examples from my experiences which demonstrate the failures of the current structure:

As a professional fire-fighter I am continually waiting for noble park, Keysborough, and Carrum downs brigades, and in the past Rowville CFA, to, maybe, respond. There have been a number of occasions where I have responding to structure fires, without knowing there is any support responding. This means we have entered house fires with only 1 appliance and no word of a second appliance responding, in this day and age in outer metro Melbourne this is Ludacris. It is an archaic system of response and must change for the better. No one will be worse off under the proposed changes; it will only bring a better public fire safety model now and in the future for the state of Victoria.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Peterson

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