

**Prue Purdey**

**From:** Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 June 2017 10:59 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

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

Mr Richard Hill  
 [REDACTED]

**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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I have a 20 year service history with the CFA. I began as a volunteer Fire fighter with a brigade in the Dandenong Ranges and joined like so many after the 1997 "Dandenong's Fires". I joined having no family history within in CFA or any basic knowledge. This decision to join was a truly life changing decision. Being a Fire fighter within CFA has shaped me to who I am today and is so much of my identity. I spent 5 year at this Volunteer brigade starting at age 19 and enjoyed every aspect of it. in 2002 I was selected to be a career Fire fighter with the CFA and have been employed as a Fire fighter ever since.

Throughout this 20 year period I have always remained positive about the CFA and have fully supported and advocated for CFA volunteer Fire fighters, I intend to do so for the next 15 - 20 years.

However even I have a reached a point where it is obvious to me that CFA is almost broken and volunteering as a Fire fighter in CFA needs a stimulant to make positive change and "break the mould". This opportunity is to reform the fire service. CFA is the most impossible organisation to make change within there is too many competing views and ideology and too many people as a result "like Deer in the headlights" stuck and frightened to make change.

Fire service reform most importantly will be a positive change for CFA volunteers, CFA, a volunteer organisation with no alleged interference from industrial bodies and no excuses would be a massively positive step. CFA has to be one of the most important organisations in the country in that in protects people from fire in the most fire prone place on the planet yet at the moment the reality is that it is completely dysfunctional and mostly gets by on good will, good will that has almost completely been eroded in the past 3 years.

An argument against the proposed fire service reform is "surge capacity" this absolutely infuriates me. Surge capacity from outer metro Melbourne into regional Victoria is vitally important but the reality is that there is almost zero surge capacity from volunteer's from integrated stations. To be very clear this comment is not to be disrespectful of volunteers as I have said I have and will continue to advocate for volunteer fire fighters but the reality is volunteers at integrated stations have very little operational (Fire fighting) impact. To stop desperately needed fire service reform because of a fear of losing "surge capacity" is to prevent change to protect something that does not exist. Conversely to make CFA a fully volunteer and independent fire fighting force that includes parts of the outer metro area would serve to invigorate and reenergise volunteers from integrated stations as they regain their independence and are given a purpose. That purpose is to build up the skills and be available to surge in times of need, in other words rebuild "surge capacity".

I could write a very lengthy submission detailing the deliberate underutilization of career Fire fighters within CFA but in short I have encountered almost on a daily basis the deliberate non response of Career fire fighters to fires and other emergency's within a reasonable travel time from an integrated CFA station. CFA uses a system of "assignment areas and assignment tables" to respond appliances to fires and it is completely out dated and ensures the underutilisation of career staff. As a result CFA are knowingly not responding the closest or quickest appliance. I could explain how this is terrible for staff morale etc. but most importantly it puts public safety at risk. In the year 2017 we don't always respond the closest or quickest appliance. As I have said CFA is the most impossible organisation to make change I have seen many good people in CFA try and fail to make reasonable changes to assignment tables. FRV needs to be formed and FRV crews and appliance to be responded to there maximum potential (reach). Career professional Fire fighters that have come from CFA and MFB are ready and willing to be worked much harder we just need to be responded.

Thankyou for considering my submission

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File1:

File2:

File3: