

7/7/17

To whom it may concern,

**INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS
COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT**

(REFORM) BILL 2017

My name is Kate Splatt. I am a Leading Fire fighter and have been with the MFB for 6 years. I have worked primarily at Sunshine (FS44) and Newport (FS42) fire stations. Working in these areas has exposed me to a wide array of working situations. This includes many major hazard facilities, factories and businesses, residential areas, schools, nursing homes and very busy roadways.

In this time I have primarily turned out with MFB appliances, but also have on many occasions responded with CFA appliances from Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Truganina, Caroline Springs and Werribee.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services.

Although I have grown up and live within the current Metropolitan Fire District, it has been the experience of many of my friends that housing affordability has pushed them beyond this current boundary. Although their purchases have been in dense housing areas, such as Point Cook, Sanctuary Lakes and Tarneit, the current fire service boundaries see them zoned as "country". This could not be further from the truth.

My knowledge and experience as a firefighter has given me invaluable insight into the importance of adequate response time, personnel and expertise. It is incredibly discouraging, and quite frightening, to know that my close and personal friends are at such great risk in the event of a house fire.

Why should they be deprived of the safety I feel within the current Metropolitan Fire District?

They do not live in the "country". They are quite clearly living in built up, metropolitan areas, only deprived of adequate emergency fire response because the current boundaries were established in 1890.

With operational staff under one banner, these outer metropolitan areas will be guaranteed a response with 2 fire appliances and minimum 7 fire fighters (2 teams of 2 wearing breathing apparatus, 2 pump operators and 1 incident controller). They will receive appropriate fire coverage and the volunteer response will not be altered. They will still respond, providing additional support if required.

The ongoing dispute has created undue mental stress on both me and my colleagues. Receiving a constant barrage of hate from certain media outlets, members of parliament and the volunteer associations, means that this dispute is not only limited to our work hours, but spills over into our personal lives. To have to constantly defend myself in a career that I solely joined to serve others takes its toll.

Passing this legislation will not only provide the fire response that people living in outer Melbourne so rightly deserve, but also relieve undue stress on our firefighters.

Yours sincerely,

Leading Firefighter Kate Splatt