

From: steve Brennan
To: [LCSC: consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:LCSC:consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au)
Subject: Fire Service Reform Submission
Date: Friday, 7 July 2017 4:53:47 PM

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017 1.

I Steven Brennan of [REDACTED] am writing this submission as career firefighter and as a member of the public. This reform should reflect two main points, whats best for the community and safety. With this as the focus, I fully support the proposed reform of the fire services Victoria. As a Leading Firefighter with 11 years service with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and currently stationed at Ringwood fire station I have attended numerous fires/incidents including Black Saturday and Hazlewood. I have also been involved with the CFA volunteers for several years promoting the prep fire ed program at our local school. Working at Ringwood and surrounding suburbs such as Croydon and Templestowe, I regularly turn out with both CFA volunteers and career firefighters and over the years believe to have a good working relationship.

I fully support the proposed reforms for the following reasons:

Current Boundaries: The current fire service boundaries are not designed to facilitate the current population growth that has occurred in Victoria over the last 60 years or into the future. Victoria's current population of 4.8 million and a growth rate of 2.4% per year with an estimated 8 million plus people by 2050, and yet 35 areas including Springvale, Hallam, Dandenong, Taylors Lakes, Geelong etc are outside the metropolitan boundaries and regarded as country. The population and infrastructure in these areas is already significant and the communities in these areas deserve the appropriate fire service without the **NON ATTENDANCE** and **DELAYED ATTENDANCE** when they call for an emergency service to respond. The public deserve the highest standard of fire service and currently this is not the case.

Current Structure: A reform of the current fire service would integrate and streamline both MFB and CFA career firefighters and allow for best practices to operate within the organisation such as the same procedures, equipment and training standards needed to preform in these highly urbanized areas. This recommendation has been made on several occasion over past years. Other states in Australia have a similar fire service as the proposed reform and I believe Victoria would also benefit from such a service.

Current level of service to the public: There are currently a number of suburbs in my area that do not have the appropriate level of fire services that people pay for and deserve such as Emergency Medical Response, 7 professional firefighters on the fire ground, rapid response times of 8 mins and minimum qualifications such as Breathing Apparatus. There is no logical reason that people living in suburbs such as Scoresby do not have EMR. The public deserve this level of service.

Benefits to the CFA volunteers: I live in Olinda and have a great deal of respect for the work and service the CFA volunteers provide for their local communities. They give up their personal time with loved ones to help others. The proposed reform allows the CFA volunteers to remain as the current volunteer organisation with additional recruiting, funding and training and the potential for presumptive legislation. I believe that the surge capacity from volunteers would not change and possibly increase if a restructure was made that allowed suitable candidates of volunteers from across all of Victoria to be trained in this area. This would allow people from Metropolitan areas to be qualified in areas such as wildfire, driver training and basic firefighting and be able respond from an allocated staging area if a surge situation occurs.

Safety as a firefighter on the fire ground: Best practice for safety as a firefighter on the fire ground is to have a minimum of 7 firefighters at any one time. This is the standard for highly urbanized areas for developed countries world over. The safety of the firefighters means that they can then provide the best level of service and safety to the public.

The current fire service needs to change to suit the times and needs of Victoria. The proposed fire service reform will streamline, modernize and improve our fire services throughout urbanized Victoria and provide the public a world class fire service they deserve.

Kind Regards,

Steve Brennan

