

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

***Can this please remain confidential.**

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

**INQUIRY INTO THE FIGHTERS PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND
FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BIL 2017**

My name is Greg Kinross and I have been with the CFA for just over 35 years, 15 years of that as a career fire-fighter. I am currently a Senior Station Officer at the Warrnambool Fire Station, and still hold a volunteer position at Maldon where I began my association with the CFA at 16 years of age. I joined as a volunteer to serve and help my community, and to give something back, but also to follow my parents (as in all small communities across Victoria) into a life of community service, not for reward or self-gratification. My career now still gives me an opportunity to serve and help my community, but through greater awareness and skills I have learnt and developed over time.

I do have 35years CFA service, the national medal plus first bar, the national emergency medal for my service in Bendigo as a career fire-fighter on Black Saturday, and I was awarded 'Life Membership' of the Maldon Fire Brigade for my service to that brigade as a member, lieutenant and 9 years as Captain. I currently have specialist skills in JFAIP (juvenile fire awareness & intervention program), High Angle Rescue, Confined Space Rescue and Trench Rescue, along with other specialist equipment currently in operation at Warrnambool.

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

As a fire-fighter it is important to have guaranteed backup, that the appropriate trucks and fire-fighters are dispatched to fires in my community and be on scene within 8 minutes.

This means the community is getting the best possible response and we as fire-fighters can do our job safely, to protect the community and ourselves.

I firmly believe that if you join the CFA as a volunteer, you do so for reasons I have stated earlier, and with that I believe volunteers will continue to protect and serve their communities, without any effect from the proposed changes, otherwise you may have joined for the wrong reasons.

Volunteers will still be strongly supported by experienced Operations Officers and Operations Managers; they will still be trained by experienced bushfire and structural instructors.

They will not need to put up with EBA negotiations every three years, with the CFA being able to concentrate on the volunteers instead of having leaders distracted with the EBA process.

They will still have the Chief Officer and he will still have all his powers.

The reform is primarily around the 35 integrated stations and their primary response areas, and will have no effect on other volunteer brigades or bush fire response, the 35 areas are all now highly urbanised with significant life risk through residential, hospitals, aged care facilities as well as industrial risk.

In Warrnambool the volunteer options to co-locate or move! This is entirely their decision, and will be supported by the CFA. If they stay co-located they will be treated just as they are now, equal and with respect!

We are a remote city and rely heavily on our volunteer's response, but unfortunately over time as work and family commitments grow, we cannot always depend on a full volunteer response or a delayed response as the volunteers tackle more traffic just to move around the city in order to get to the fire station.

With this reform we can see a standardisation of career training/specialist response and equipment. This will bring efficiencies through this standardisation.

This long drawn-out dispute has damaged our reputation and has placed great strain on relationships and family's. This needs to end and this reform gives us the best chance to do so.

This reform will benefit volunteers with its package to assist volunteer recruitment and retention, training and station upgrades.

Yours sincerely

Greg Kinross

Senior Station Officer

Warrnambool Fire Station

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02/07/2017