

By email: LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

1. My name is:

Andrew Gibson

- Rank                      • Senior Station Officer
- Organisation          • Country Fire Authority.
- Service                    • 15.5 Years Employment, 3 Years Volunteer CFA
  - 13 Years experience at major stations and Two years stationed in regional towns.

**2. I live in Highton and work in Geelong City.**

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

Working in Emergency Management over the years has seen a great expansion in the role and response of the fire service under the All Hazards-All Agency approach.

As such, the type of emergency response and number of responses has increased dramatically and the expectation of Volunteers to continue to burden the load in the outer metropolitan regions and major regional centres is not realistic in 2017.

Society as a whole demand a level of service, and a level of service that is acceptable in 2017 is not the same as what was expected and achievable in 1977.

I only want to focus on one aspect of the proposed benefit to the community with the proposed changes, and that is the enhanced rescue capability of the Heavy Pumpers located around the State.

The one area of response that we in the Fire Service respond to that has the most impact on death and injury to the public is Road Accident Rescue. Presently we only have three staffed stations in the CFA that operate Heavy Rescue appliances, with the rest of the CFA response area covered by Volunteer RAR crews from CFA and SES.

I refer you to the Victorian Auditor General's report on Emergency Services Response Times 2015.

In this report it highlights that on average rural and Urban RAR response times are 28.7 minutes by CFA and 31 minutes by SES.

This is a long time to be holding someone together in a mangled vehicle or industrial machinery while we wait for the "allowed" rescue appliance to arrive to undertake the task of removing the patient.

By creating FRV, this will enable a much quicker response where rapid intervention can occur quicker for victims of Accidents which will only have a positive effect for the person physically, mentally and economically. It will also have a positive effect for the State, as roads will be closed for less periods of time allowing the transport industry and commuters to go about their business quicker.

This will be achieved by having radial response by RFV with a 90 second response by trucks that are equipped with heavy rescue gear operated by trained operators.

How can a better service to the community be a bad thing?

Secondly, it is a fact that we are an ageing population, and this is true for the Volunteer ranks. Volunteerism is decreasing in numbers across the State in all areas where it is provided and young people are not taking up where the older members are leaving off.

A re-vamped Fire Service is required to relieve the pressures that are being placed on the stretched Volunteer force. Eg: Lorne over the summer period.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Gibson

