

Dear Inquiry Committee,

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

My name is [REDACTED], a Fire fighter of 3 years' experience with the MFB.

I live in Patterson Lakes in the South Eastern Suburbs and which lies within the CFA fire zone, for the last 3 years have worked Equal amounts of time at Mentone, Windsor and currently at West Melbourne fire stations

At Windsor and West Melbourne we respond primarily with MFB appliances from Inner Melbourne areas, at Mentone however, we responded with other MFB appliances but also with CFA appliances from Springvale and Edithvale.

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

There are times when our job can have its inherit risks, sometimes unavoidable but most often can be mitigated, whether that be through Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP's), Training or Experience.

In this case legislation can be a mitigating factor to dangers I will face in my daily work life.

Responding to fires that occur in houses, apartments, workplaces, schools and hospitals is the core function of fire services. A well established system of ensuring the safety of both the occupants of these buildings, and the firefighters who attend is to send a minimum of seven firefighters. Unlike inner Melbourne, this response is not guaranteed in areas like Geelong, Bendigo, Frankston, Shepparton, Dandenong, and Point Cook. These densely populated areas contain among other things high rise developments, major hospitals, universities, and large shopping centres. These regions and their residents are deserving of the exact same coverage that exists in inner Melbourne.

Last month a well publicised fire took hold of the Grenfell residential tower in England. This fire took place in west London, crews were on scene within 6 minutes, more than 500 people live in the tower, 80 of which lost their lives. The fire accelerated rapidly due largely to the combustible cladding on the building's facade. This material has been found to be present on a number of buildings throughout Melbourne and Victoria. I believe it is incumbent on this committee to consider the ramifications

The suggested reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response, that means where I live (Patterson Lakes) will not change and in those stations that will change, the CFA will continue to work alongside, co-located with FRV in a similar arrangement that the MFB currently has with Ambulance Victoria.

As I stated at the beginning TTP's can have a mitigating factor in risk management on the fire ground, as it stands now CFA and MFB employ separate TTP's and work with different equipment and appliances meaning that the communities protection varies dependant on their residence.

While acknowledging the great work the CFA professional and volunteer firefighters do for the community, the idea that an area of Melbourne such as City of Casey, which now contains hundreds of thousands of people, can be serviced by just one professional fire station is outdated and leaves these communities vulnerable and unprotected.

Bringing the 2 professional fire services under one banner will eventually standardize everything with the exception of speciality equipment and can help to ensure a better level of training for all professional fire fighters.

This legislation passing is a positive result for all Victorians and I am more than willing to be contacted for any clarification or queries relating to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]