

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 10:16 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Conan Daley

T: 4 [REDACTED]

E: [REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

--

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

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

I have been employed as a firefighter by Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade for 14 years and hold the rank of Station Officer. I have an Advanced Diploma in Fire Technology and a Graduate Certificate in Fire Engineering.

I am rostered within Central District Operations and at the time of writing am station at Carlton assigned to the Heavy Rescue unit.

My role with the fire service is that of Incident Controller upon the fireground, and manager of firefighters on a day to day basis. I see my most important role is that of ensuring the safety of my crew and the community.

I am hereby making a submission to the Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

I wholeheartedly support this fire services reform and wish to provide two examples of why this is important for Victorians and for firefighter safety.

Part A

Structural firefighting involves an active internal attack on the fire combined with search and rescue. To accomplish this firefighters are required to don breathing apparatus (BA) which provide clean air to breath

and to protect them from the harmful smoke and products of combustion.

Whilst wearing BA is relatively safe and firefighters spend many hours training with it, the risks of wearing BA in a structure fire include running out of air and entrapment/injury. For these reasons alone is a significantly important to note that having an oncoming crew with BA capability is essential for the safety of those that risk their own life to save lives and property. This second crew is providing the role of back and can rescue the initial crews should anything go wrong.

Within MFB, we have procedures and training in place to ensure the safety of BA operators, and for any alarm of fire there will always be a minimum of two appliances dispatched to ensure that the safety of our BA wearers is achieved.

This is standard for any modern fire service worldwide and I would like to think that in 2017 it would be remiss of any employer to fail to provide this essential 'back-up' in the dynamic situation that is a structure fire.

However my colleagues over at CFA do not receive this same level of safety protection. I regularly hear of calls where volunteer units either arrive without any crew members being trained in BA, or worse still volunteer units fail to even respond. This not only affects the initial BA crews, but also the communities that they protect.

With population growth soaring off the charts and not looking like slowing down, it is time that the communities within the urbanised CFA areas receive the fire protection they deserve. Additionally the firefighters working in these areas need the resources required to do their job safely so that they can return home to their families at the end of their shift.

Part B

With modern housing contents and finishing's, a fire in a structure can develop to flashover in rapid time. It is regarded that to contain the fire to the room of origin and effect rescue firefighters need to be on-scene in 8 minutes.

I have seen first-hand the difference minutes make in the growth of a fire and the benefit of rapid firefighting.

The statistics for volunteer brigades in urban areas failing to respond are staggering. I find it incredible that a community on one side of a road can have such inferior fire service protection than another.

An example of when I have witnessed this was in September 2016 when I was working at Mentone fire station.

We were turned out for a reported non-structure fire (papers burning) along the train line at Mordialloc train station. MFB Mentone and Clayton were dispatched along with CFA Edithvale.

Whilst enroute I heard Edithvale 'turn-out' and from this I assumed that they were also enroute.

In the time that it took for me to investigate the area, Clayton to book on-scene and assist investigations, and then send wordback, Edithvale had still not made it on-scene.

When I gave the 'Stop' wordback I then heard Edithvale give 'returning and in station' in one radio transmission. Hence, they had never left station due to having insufficient crew.

If this had been a house fire next door to the station, they would not have had sufficient crew to begin firefighting operations for in excess of 15 minutes.

I have concern for my family and friends that live in the urban CFA areas with potentially inferior fire service response. Additionally, I have concern for my crews if we have to travel extended distances to areas covered by volunteers if it means facing developed fires and additional dangers caused by this.

Finally I would like to add that I respect and admire the work that volunteer firefighters do for their communities and beyond when responding to major bushfire events. There will always be a need for the services of volunteers and I believe that if this bill is passed they will be able to continue to provide their services without any detriment.

Thank you for considering my submission and please pass the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Respectfully,

Conan Daley
MFB Station Officer 10249

--

File1:

File2:

File3: