

Prue Purdey

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 4:37 PM
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 Robert Purcell
 [REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I'm pleased to make this submission.

I have attached several documents that I believe are important examples of work conducted by contemporary fire services that have not been referenced or mentioned in the public and parliamentary debate. The public and parliamentary debate has focused on fire station locations, crewing arrangements (paid and volunteer) and firefighter terms of employment.

I have attached the MFBs community resilience strategic action plan, a submission made by MFB Officers to the Federal Senate Inquiry 2015 into Non Conforming Building Products and the submission made by Senior MFB Officers to the federal Senate Inquiry into the Use of Smoke Alarms as part of my submission. This advocacy documents are readily obtainable documents provide evidence of fire service actions that a contemporary fire service must provide as a service to the community. These are just three examples but there are many more.

The reason for attaching these submissions is in short, is that they details actions that all contemporary fire services must partake in to deliver a holistic service to the community, that being advocacy.

Without prevention, planning and supporting relief and recovery actions (resilience building and strengthen), our community will not receive the support they need to build and maintain resilience. Our most vulnerable community members such as those with disabilities or some elderly will also suffer if we cannot work with support agencies to develop programs that address there needs. For example, firefighters alone cannot deal with the volume of calls that will come with our ageing population staying in their domestic residence (current government policy).

Response alone will does not service the community fire safety needs,now and into the future.

Up to 50% of fire across the community are dealt with by community, who are always the first responder.

This community response comes from the education in fire safety and mitigation provided by fire service subject matter experts who support our front-line firefighters.

The parliamentary and community debate so far has only focused on firefighters responding from fire stations. While important to the safety continuum, they are one part of the fire safety solution. Much of the safety overlay we have established over hundreds of years of urban settlement comes from failure. e.g. the great fires of London and New York established building regulations and laws that prevented fires from starting and continuing or growing. Recent examples are the laws that mandate smoke alarms in domestic residences (1994) that has seen a dramatic fall in death, injuries and property damage across Victoria/ Australia.

Our stations and firefighters must be maintained to support and deliver community education, engagement and fire safety improvements such as fire separation and compartmentalisation, smoke and heat alarms, sprinklers, and understanding human behaviour. These initiatives are brought about by research pre and post fire. Understanding the history of fire and it's impact on the community is fundamental to developing a contemporary and modern fire service. Focusing on firefighters and stations and their locations alone will result in a flawed outcome.

A modern fire service must also be efficient and effective with the community funds it receives and expenditure focused on firefighting staff alone would diminish many great programs and initiatives that bring effective and efficient fire safety measures. Firefighters should be paid well for the role they play but it cannot be at the expense and exclusion of other community programs and resilience building initiatives.

The construct of the firefighters award must also provide protection for their conditions but not limit the ability of the chief officer/ commissioner to operate and act before, during or after an in emergency.

A contemporary fire service must also be a reflection of community, diverse, inclusive and provide opportunities for staff to be flexible in their working arrangements.

A truly modern fire service understands all these elements and builds a service to provide and support that holistic approach. I would welcome the opportunity to present in person the the committee the expand and further explain these views.

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File1: [59549ff3af5f0-Community Resilience Strategic Action Plan V1 0 Final.pdf](#)

File2: [59549ff3afea1-MFB Submission-Use of smoke alarms.pdf](#)

File3: [59549ff3b01e9-MFB submission - Non conforming building products.pdf](#)