

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

I am Darren Conlin Commander Counter Terrorism Coordination for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Melbourne. I have been employed by the MFB since 1985 (32) years.

I hold numerous qualifications attained both within and outside of the MFB including: Graduate Certificate Management, Graduate Certificate of Applied Management, and Graduate Diploma of Executive Leadership.

I have represented the MFB in the Williamson Community Leadership Program and have been a recipient of the Emergency Services Foundation Scholarship.

2. I live in Pascoe Vale and work in Melbourne's CBD.

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

The current MFB and CFA boundaries were established in the 1950's when the two agencies Acts were written. Since that time there has been significant urban growth and the idea of rural and urban fire service is no longer represented by those boundaries. Many areas that in the 1950's were regarded as rural are now medium to high density urban areas.

As you are fully aware, the risks associated with rural and urban areas can be significantly different. I am a strong advocate for the application of similar risks receives similar mitigation strategies, regardless of their physical location. Once an area reaches as certain risk rating regarding population, critical infrastructure, residential development ect, then that area should receive a full time 24/7 fire service delivery model.

Our fire service delivery model is out dated, and as indicated in 8 reviews in the past ten years it requires modernisation. As Melbourne grows to be Australia's largest populated city the challenges associated with emergency response to major incidents involving terrorism, hazardous materials and public infrastructure will become increasingly more complex. Our communities deserve a fire service delivery model based on risk, not geographical location.

It is also important that in urban environments where the risk for loss of life may be increased due to population density that a common approach to service delivers is achieved. By that I mean that all responders have the same level of training and skill acquisition ensuring that incident controllers are fully aware of the capability of all responders. Currently, this is not the case, as not all volunteers possess the same basic

qualifications, this can be quite a challenge to incident controllers when developing objectives and strategies to mitigate an emergency incident.

A new identity covering Melbourne and major regional areas will achieve a fairer and effective approach for Victorians. Those who volunteer in our communities will still be heavily relied upon. They will continue to provide coverage in rural areas and contribute as valuable surge capacity for major events. I do not accept and have not heard any reasonable argument as to how the formation of Fire Rescue Victoria will adversely impact on volunteer numbers and therefore reduce surge capacity. I look forward with great anticipation to Victoria's modernised fire service delivery model.

Yours sincerely,

Commander Darren Conlin

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