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From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 9:07 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 Thomas Morley
[REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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As a volunteer of 15 years and a brigade Captain, I am supportive of the Fire Services Bill in principal noting the following points to the terms of reference.

• Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria:

1. This bill will better position volunteers with fire truck development, equipment selection and training course approval, where they previously got held up by industrial action or UFU approval.

2. FRV being the only avenue for CFA Operation Officers and Operations Managers is restrictive and narrow-minded. The same can be said about training instructors who only come from FRV, where CFA will eventually lose its diversity in trainers experience. Some of the best trainers have come from DELWP, Air Services Australia or even SA CFS.

The CFA needs flexibility to recruit its operational leaders, trainers and operational staff based on merit and experience from across the sector therefore best match the position, not just from the one gene pool.

3. Two and a half minute faster response by FRV will not greatly increase fire protection in metropolitan Victoria, assuming the CFA have the same training competencies, equipment and infrastructure available. Where volunteers currently don't, with older trucks, heavier equipment and no specialist equipment like Infrared Cameras.

This new paradigm need CFA's infrastructure, equipment, truck resourcing and training supported, further strengthening volunteer passion and commitment to overcome the adversity of the emergency; and ultimately building and foster community resilience.

• Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery:

1. This bill will reduce the politics and tension that exists within the CFA every time an CFA staff EBA is being negotiated, allowing the volunteer association to focus on volunteer issues.
 2. This bill will allow volunteers to lead CFA strike teams from metropolitan areas, which was limited to career officers due to reporting issues.
 3. This bill will allow volunteer CFA brigades within FRV area to once again support other CFA brigades, where the only previous chance they had was if the career staff were already committed at an emergency.
 4. Volunteering at CFA brigades will likely reduce if they are treated and resourced like the NSW Rural Fire Service, which only responds to bush, grass and crop fires.
 5. FRV being the only avenue for CFA Operation Officers and Operations Managers is restrictive and narrow-minded. The same can be said about training instructors who only come from FRV, where CFA will eventually lose its diversity in trainers experience. Some of the best trainers have come from DELWP, Air Services Australia or even SA CFS.
- The CFA needs flexibility to recruit its operational leaders, trainers and operational staff based on merit and experience from across the sector therefore best match the position, not just from the one gene pool.

- Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision:

1. Volunteer brigades are already poorer and under equipped, with truck up to 25 years old, stations without toilets or internet connections, a radio to share between 5 volunteer fire-fighters, heavy steel breathing sets and one set of protective clothing.

When compared to career fire-fighters, who get newer and more powerful trucks, a portable radio each, lightweight carbon fibre breathing sets, thermal imaging cameras and gas detectors, 3 sets of protective clothing just to name a few differences. This gap will continue to grow, and the safety of volunteers continued to be risked, if the CFA base funding is not strengthen and equipment and infrastructure improvements planned for.

2. CFA will be stripped of a large amount of its capital assets, with multimillion-dollar fire stations and million dollar fire trucks transferring over to FRV. Therefore volunteer CFA will have reduced capital to liquidate and re-invest to manage changing community risk. Local CFA brigades will need to beg the government for more money or continue to ask for the support from their communities for donations, to maintain or upgrade its aging fire truck fleet and substandard stations.

3. Fire levy freeze for two years will only see the current changes implemented, but long-term I am expecting the state of Victoria to carry a heavy financial burden to maintain the FRV model into the future as the UFU's push to claim more territory.

- Underlying policy rationale:

1. This situation has been brought upon the state of Victoria, based on the Government of the day, for not equally respecting the CFA volunteer fire-fighter's role, and by allowing an industrial body to strong arm corporate and operational decision making through an EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT.

I encourage you to support this bill with amendments, being a solid funding commitment (equipment, training and infrastructure) for CFA so we can continue to provide a matched fire service while using volunteered time.

To provide CFA with the flexibility to recruit its operational leaders and trainers based on merit, not just from FRV.

These changes will motivate me to continue to give my time, risk my life to best serve my community.

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File1:

File2:

File3: