

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

*Chair - Gordon Rich Philips*

*Deputy Chair – Daniel Mulino*

*Colleen Hartland*

*Daniel Young*

*Cesar Melham*

*Harriet Shing*

*Luke O’Sullivan*

*Wendy Lovell*

I write to you regarding the **INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS’ PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

My Name is Lee Nolan and I am a Qualified Fire Fighter with the CFA, stationed at Boronia Fire Brigade. I have been at Boronia for 14 months and previously worked 2 years at the Craigieburn Fire Brigade.

During my time at Craigieburn I also had the opportunity to work shifts at all stations in the district, including, Eltham, Greenvale, Sunbury, Hoppers Crossing, Melton, Point Cook, South Morang, and Caroline Springs. I have also worked in rural integrated Brigades at Wodonga and Wangaratta.

I currently live in Mooroolbark and also Volunteered with the Mooroolbark brigade for 3 years prior to my full time employment with the CFA.

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

First and foremost I believe I deserve to come to work every day and carry out my job in an environment where all aspects of OHS have been covered and put into practice by not only myself and my crew, but my employer. The current system is out dated and unsafe. I have been to too many jobs where we have been the only truck on scene (Not the only truck responded) and had to work outside our OHS policies to perform duties and carry out rescues.

This occurs due to an over reliance on volunteer brigades to respond accordingly and in a timely manner. This may be due to time of day, nature off call, available members, available drivers, etc. It doesn't matter why they are not getting to these calls, the fact is that it is not guaranteed that a truck and suitably skilled crew will turn out and arrive on scene.

Another concerning issue I have with this is the mixed bag of skills and qualifications that volunteers bring. Yes, there are some highly trained volunteers out there that do a fantastic job, and I'm certainly not discounting the need for Volunteers in Victoria as the community relies on them in the country areas. However the reality is that these volunteers cannot be relied upon to turn out to ALL fire calls. This then results in a truck arriving with 1 or 2 fire fighters on board, or 3, 4 or 5 on board that have just made it through minimum skills and don't have the required skills and protective clothing to be able to give any assistance at all.

This leads into the argument that we require at least 7 Career Professional Fire fighters to be responded to ALL Fire calls in the metro and outer metro areas to allow us to safely and swiftly carry out our job to protect the community and more importantly go home to our families after each and every shift.

I recall several occasions whilst volunteering in Mooroolbark, which is a heavily urbanised area, that I responded to the station when a fire call was received (doing my best to arrive at the station within the allowable 4 minutes) and waited 7-10 minutes for someone to turn up that could drive the truck... when no one else arrived we could not turn out and simply went back to what we were doing before..... So what about the person who has called 000? How much longer do they need to wait for a fire truck? Other than this wasting valuable time, it placed extra strain on other resources that have to travel further, leaving their primary area unsafe to pick up the slack for brigades that are continually failing to respond.

How would you feel if you're house was burning, or your loved one was trapped in a car wreck and you knew there were Fire Fighters at the station but couldn't drive the truck out to assist....? This is simply NOT good enough!

Surely in this day and age we value our community more than this?? Surely the community who pay a Fire Service Levy deserves the best possible Fire response available. In this day and age professionals should be able to come to a workplace knowing that their employer is providing the safest possible workplace for their employees. I strongly argue that the Fire services in their current form DO NOT provide any of this and it needs to be changed!

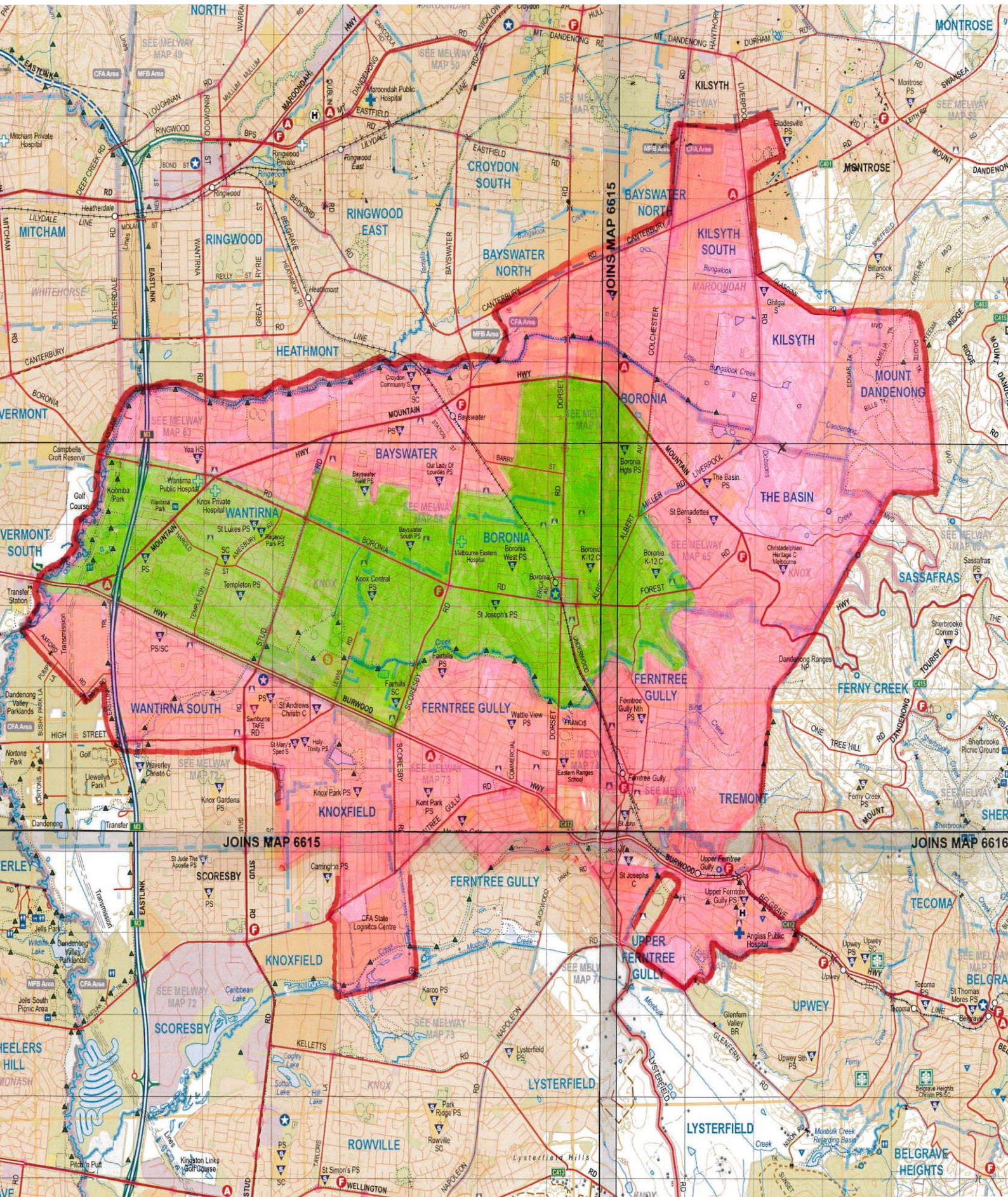
Having worked across more than 10 integrated fire stations, I'm sad to say that the same problems are consistent across all areas. Volunteers do a fantastic job but they just simply cannot be relied upon to give the required response 100% of the time.

As you may be aware most integrated CFA stations are carrying out EMR (Emergency Medical Response) in their primary fire district. Here at Boronia we are part of the '10 Minute' Trial. This is a trial where we will respond to an EMR within a pre-determined 10 minute radial response.

I draw your attention to the attached Map. The Green highlighted area is Boronia's Primary Fire district. This is the area in which we are the primary response to all fire calls. Where an incident occurs outside this we are only a supporting brigade and responses into these areas are dictated by local brigade captains.

The pink highlighted area is the area in which we will cover under the '10 minute EMR trial'. Meaning for all EMR calls we are responded in 90 seconds anywhere into this large area.

My question to you is why is it acceptable for career Fire Fighters to respond in 90 seconds into this large area for EMR calls only? Why is this not the same for all Fire Calls? Why is it ok for the public to have to wait so long for a volunteer brigade to turn out (if at all) when we (career Fire Fighters) can service this whole area with a 90 second response, 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year? Is this really in the best interests of the community?



In closing I'd like to re-iterate the need for a safer workplace and a safer, more effective and efficient fire service for the Victorian public. I believe the only way to achieve this is to support this legislation and change the antiquated fire service currently serving Victoria.

I thank you for the opportunity and appreciate you taking the time to read my submission.

Yours sincerely,



**Lee Nolan** – Qualified Fire fighter D shift  
Boronia Fire Station – 300 Boronia Road, Boronia, Vic 3155

