

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

Hello my name is Darren Padgett, below is a list of my current history with CFA.

Senior Station Officer (SSO) with the Country Fire Authority. I am currently stationed at Dandenong.

During this time I have been appointed to Frankston, Hallam and Morwell. I have also worked at nearly every integrated station relieving from time to time.

I have served as both a Volunteer and Staff FF. 37 Years as a volunteer at Montrose CFA and 15 Years as a CFA Career FF.

My Qualifications include qualified SSO and I am also Operation Officer (OO) qualified.

I have increments in the following specialties; Heavy Rescue Operator, Ladder Platform Trench Rescue, Ground Observer, Fire Investigator, Strike Team Leader and EMR. I also manage two Portfolios at Dandenong FS

I have been awarded a CFA 35 year service medal, First clasp Nation Service medal and the Emergency Medal for the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

I live in Pakenham and work in Dandenong

As stated above I also volunteer for Montrose and have done so for 37 years.

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

- As a firefighter that works in one of the busiest CFA integrated station we do on average 2500 call per year. It is so important to have a guaranteed backup - guaranteed that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes.
- When we are on scene time is critical for saving life and property, CAN YOU AFFORD TO WAIT FOR A RESPONSE THATS NOT GAURENTEED TO ATTENED?
- And then having to wait another 4 mins for the next Volunteer support to respond. I know I wouldn't want to be trapped in a fire.
- What a greater response means for community is protection and a faster better fire service, wither it be Fire, EMR or Road Rescue we can provide a response when needed not a hopeful one.

- Employing career firefighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity, infact it will enhance it with a greater ability to get Heavy Pumpers in to protect towns so the Volunteers can fight the fire.
- I have asked many volunteer Fire fighters at locations where I work with and support and at my Volunteer Brigade and nobody can explain how FRV will effect surge capacity or infact what effect FRV will have on their daily running of the Brigade.
- Volunteer support will be maintained with operational firefighters (OO's OMs etc being employed by FRV but continuing their roles through an arrangement with CFA) And we will still support CFA as we always have
- The reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas will have no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response if fact it will be able to support them more.
- The 35 areas are now highly urbanised – high residential and risks.
- Dandenong support Keysborough and Noble Park brigades. Both Brigades constantly fail to respond or go beyond there SDS (allocated response times) They both service the South Eastern suburbs, one of Victorias fastest growing industrial areas where there is a significant risk and a ever changing population.
- Within these support Brigades I have to deal with;

Requesting another Brigade which is another delay when they don't respond when first paged.

Their lack of skills e.g. No Breathing Apparatus wearers,

Not trained to combat fire or conduct a search for possible persons trapped in a burning building.

The Crew leader is often the Driver of the appliance. How can he operate the pumper and control a fire at the same time? He can't.

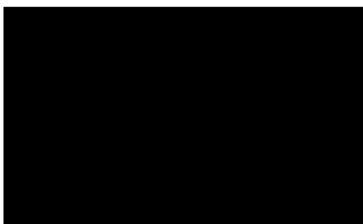
The crews are not qualified to go into a burning Structure; in some cases they are only wearing wildfire Turnout gear.

The surrounding Brigades are known to sleep in their Stations to maintain a crew to respond and at time they send out messages begging for drivers, we get no notification if this issue.

This reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment, better for the Community.

The damage this dispute has had on my workplace and the additional strain that it's had on me and my family need to finish. This change will stop this.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA; and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades etc. this has to be good for everyone.



Senior Station Officer Darren Padgett
Country Fire Authority

