

Brodie Cole, Fire Fighter

Geelong City Fire Station

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Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

#### INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS

#### COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT

#### (REFORM) BILL 2017

I am a Level 2 Fire Fighter who has been on station for 12 months; previously I was a volunteer at Hoppers Crossing Fire Station. I live in the Wyndham catchment which is protected by a largely volunteer fire service. This area has seen the highest rate of population growth in Victoria over the last 5 - 10 years and yet has not seen any changes to its fire service delivery. At this point in time there is no guarantee that a fire truck will respond, let alone two trucks with sufficient fire fighters with the correct cross section of skills to perform the task at hand safely. A Fire Service reform would stop the confusion for the community and ensure that the large urban areas of Victoria will be provided with a highly trained and suitable response to all incidents. This is a necessary modernisation of an emergency service that is long overdue; the service should be flexible with the ability to grow alongside the population and risk growth of the state.

As a previous volunteer supporting Career Fire Fighters at Hoppers Crossing I have had firsthand experience with the challenges faced by volunteers when it comes to responding to incidences. Along with the growth of urban areas comes the build-up of traffic, restricting the response time of volunteers. When I was at Hoppers Crossing I was living 2.1km from the station, this journey could take me anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes at peak times of the day. This is what the majority of volunteers would have to face on their journey to the station in the growing urban areas of Victoria. This delay in volunteer response not only delays the service delivery to the community but also endangers the lives of the Fire Fighters who will be left with insufficient crewing to perform all required roles safely at the incident.

This reform is not just about combining the two fire services; it's about delivering a life dependant service to a growing community.

Yours Sincerely,

Brodie Cole

Level 2 Fire Fighter

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