

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

I am Robert West
Qualified Fire Fighter

Currently employed at CFA Ocean Grove and previously at Caroline Springs and Ballarat City F.S

- 3 Years of career service

Specialist qualifications: Hazmat tech, Heavy Hazmat qualified, PE Support qualified.

I live in Gisborne and work in Ocean Grove.

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

- To have 7 firefighters dispatched to a fire and or incident for my own safety, the safety of my peers (career and volunteer) and most importantly the safety and protection of the community.

It is getting harder and harder for volunteers (not just CFA) to give up their time and make themselves available to volunteer to help their communities. This means that there is no guaranteed response from a volunteer brigade that may be supporting us or us supporting them. So we may not have the firefighters needed to combat a fire or incident safely.

- To support a fire service reform that doesn't affect the volunteers and will continue to be supported by operational firefighters (OO's, OM's etc.) that are employed by FRV. To support a fire service reform that increases funding, training and recruiting for volunteer firefighters.
- The 35 areas that the fire service reform will be introduced to are now highly urbanised – high residential and commercial risks along with major state infrastructure require a fast 8 minute response.
- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment.
- I have now been employed as a career fire fighter for 3 years and the whole time we have been in dispute. It is time that it came to an end it has taken its toll on me, my family and my work place. I no longer read newspapers due to the constant attacks on career firefighters the impact it has on me when reading them. I'm sick of having to discuss and explain the mistruths that are put out in the media about firefighters. It angers me that my wife has to explain what is happening and defend my profession to people in our community.

I look forward to a day where my workplace is not in dispute and morale is high, when the people I work with look forward to coming to work and helping/protecting the community. I joined up as a firefighter to help the community not to be abused and treated like a second class citizen.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Robert West

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Email:

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