

Prue Purdey

From: Jason Adams [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2017 9:59 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am Qualified Firefighter (QFF) Jason Adams and am currently stationed at Ballarat City Fire Station. I have been a career firefighter since May 2014, previous to becoming a Professional Firefighter I volunteered for 7 years with Sebastopol Fire Brigade so I do have a good understanding of both sides of the fence. Since being a Professional Firefighter and I am have increments / qualifications for the Pumper, Tanker, Heavy Hazmat Operator, Chemical/Biological and Radiation, Low Angle Ropes also.

I live in Ballarat, Victoria and have been stationed at Corio Fire Station, Belmont Fire Station, Ocean Grove Fire Station, Carolyn Springs Fire Station and now work at Ballarat City Fire Station.

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

- The proposed submission of 7 firefighters being dispatched to an incident is vital for the best protection for our community and ourselves. I joined the CFA to serve our community and believe this is the best way to manage incidents, it is evident that volunteers are struggling to turn their appliances out during work hours as there are numerous times where they have not responded at all. I sympathise with volunteers as supporting their family's and earning a wage for their family is definitely a priority. During my time as a volunteer to add to the average working day, you may need to respond at all hours of the night, this can become quite tiring and also impact on the workplace. These proposed changes will assist with ensuring our communities are protected day and night, at the end of the day this should not offend anyone as we have all joined to serve our communities, be it Professional or Volunteer. To add to this working in Ballarat is supported by 3 volunteer stations directly and there are examples on many occasions that they are unable to respond, this is a gap that needs to be fixed to ensure we are protecting our communities.
- The proposed changes to Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) will in no way impact on volunteer turnout or surge capacity, if anything this will further enhance our capacity to protect and serve our communities.
- That 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)
- That the reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response.
- The 35 areas are now highly urbanised – high residential and other risks

- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment etc
- In my opinion moving paid professional firefighters to one service will allow both FRV and CFA to get back to what they do best, which is protecting the communities. This focus on the communities has been lost due to people’s concerns of an EBA and how they may be affected, this will give the Volunteers full control of managing just the volunteers and vice versa for the FRV staff. Then the focus can be back on to the communities after all the community does pay a Fire Service Levy so we are expected to protect the community to the best of our ability.
- The damage that has been done with being what I feel is a political football is beyond repair as it stands. There is no way of an EBA being signed off in the current model and this very draining dispute is taking its toll on me as a person, my family and is not good for the mental health of professional and volunteer firefighters. We need to get back to just looking after our community and learning to work together again, it’s a win win for both Career and Volunteer firefighters in my opinion.
- 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

There is so much evidence in the way the service sits currently is simply not working:

In Conclusion, one example is that in Ballarat itself there is constant failures to respond to firecalls, this is not the fault of the volunteers merely they have paid jobs to attend to which puts pressure on the ability to turn out. This reduces our potential ability to rescue someone, save a house from being completely destroyed, rescue children that may be locked in cars, and the upcoming Emergency Medical Response will put further pressure on Volunteers turning out. I am happy to discuss my opinions and to elaborate on evidence further if you wish, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,
Jason Adams



Regards,



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