

LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

**My Background,**

I am Ian John Glass currently a Senior Station Officer at Cranbourne CFA and have been stationed here since 2005.

I first started with CFA at Dromana as a Volunteer in 1984, progressed to a career fire-fighter in CFA in 1987. Currently have served for 33 years.

Hold numerous competencies commensurate with my rank; I also have specialist skills in Incident Management, Ground Observer and RAR.

I received the Black Saturday Medal and 30 year, long service medal

I live in and work in Cranbourne; I have seen enormous growth in the area over the last 17 years. There are over 300,000 people in the City of Casey and is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria

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

Over the years the growth in our area has been dynamic. When career fire-fighters were first put into Cranbourne in 2004 the annual calls received was approximately around the 500 mark. In the 2016 /2017 financial year we have attended over 1080 calls.

Cranbourne Fire Station also provides Emergency Medical Response.

Our call rate increases every year, the pressure on CFA volunteers has become greater.

As Cranbourne is surrounded by volunteer brigades whom, when available do a fantastic job, but on many occasions volunteer brigades either can't respond in a timely manner, don't respond or don't have the necessary skills to do an internal fire fight. Data can be provided to support these claims.

An example would be a crew arriving without the necessary competencies such as breathing apparatus and search and rescue competencies at a structure fire. All career crews are competent in internal fire attack through weeks and weeks of training at VEMTC then on station. This can essentially leave my 2 crew members inside the structure with no back up if something goes wrong.

Currently my crew and I do not have a guaranteed support fire truck that will be despatched within 90 seconds or a fire truck with fire-fighters that have all the necessary competencies to carry out internal structure fire fighting in the majority of our turn out area.

Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of your constituents, and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our fire-fighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer fire-fighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

Fire Service reform is required as it will provide a safer work environment for me and my fire-fighters and be a real benefit to the community. By arriving within the 8 minutes, with crews that have all the skills we can limit fire damage to structures.

At Cranbourne we have a great repour with our volunteers and if FRV is formed that won't change the friendships built or the integration on the fire ground we currently have.

In fact our volunteers fully support the reform as they will have their autonomy and feel more valued. They would be responsible for their station, truck and equipment and this is seen as a positive by our volunteers. In fact they had a Brigade vote and it was unanimous that they move forward in accepting being a CFA volunteer only station.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a \$100 million dollar package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA; and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades etc.

The career staff would still integrate on the fire ground etc.

CFA would once again become a proud volunteer only organisation and still perform exactly as they do today, the only changes would be the career staff at those 35 integrated stations would go to FRV.

Having all the career fire-fighters in one service will not affect surge capacity as none of our current volunteers will be resigning if this goes ahead, that is all scuttlebutt.

CFA volunteers and FRV career fire-fighters will continue to provide services to the communities in need, during the year and in the summer bushfires where surge capacity is required.

FRV would not affect the way our fully volunteer neighbouring brigades function at the moment either, the career staff will continue to provide support to our neighbouring CFA Brigades and the volunteers will still support the career staff to fire calls and incidents.

Our Volunteers will be provided with support by operational fire fighters (Operation Officers, Operation Managers etc.) who will be employed by FRV and under an arrangement with CFA they will continue the current level of support they provide today, so once again nothing changes.

Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this out-dated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'.

These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career fire-fighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

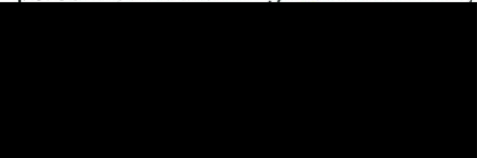
All Victorian, professional and volunteer fire-fighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

Finally the personal toll on myself, my family, my work colleagues both career and volunteer has been enormous emotionally and physically.

To be vilified in the media and by sections of politicians has had me at times feeling depressed and angry as some of the media untruths has been absolutely soul destroying at times. I /we love our jobs please let us get on with providing the services we do and do well. The vilification of career fire-fighters needs to stop.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a fire-fighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

I would be happy to provide further information or examples about my experiences where safety has been compromised or property damage has been exacerbated due to not having adequately qualified personnel on the fire ground in a timely manner.

  
Senior Station Officer Ian Glass  
CFA Cranbourne Fire Station  
Ph. 