

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

**1.**

- I am currently employed as a Leading Firefighter by the Country Fire Authority
- I have been employed by CFA since the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2006.
- I hold a number of specialist qualifications/increments such as HAZMAT / CBR operator, BA Support operator, Ground Observer and Teleboom operator.

**2.**

- I live on the Bellarine Peninsula and work in the northern suburbs of Geelong, predominantly in the areas of Corio and Norlane. I am stationed at the Corio Fire Station. The station is one of CFA's 'major' stations and for the 2016/2017 financial year we attended 1362 calls. Corio has the highest number of actual fires in the state within its primary area. Pockets of Corio and Norlane hold 80% government housing.

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

- The CFA, which was formed to service the country area of Victoria in 1958, does not in its current form reflect the needs of the community living in urbanised areas of Victoria.
- Areas of Victoria which were classified as country in the mid 1950's are now considered to be metro, including cities such as Geelong. The concept of Staff supporting Volunteers is out dated.
- I strongly disagree that Volunteers should be consulted whenever CFA professional FF's have to negotiate a new EBA with the State Government of Victoria. The introduction of the proposed fire services reform will put a stop to this.
- I find it discouraging that volunteers feel that they are affected by our EBA and that they are prepared to risk community safety to fulfil their own selfish ambitions.
- Daniel Andrews (Premier of Victoria), James Merlino (minister for Emergency Services) Steve Warrington (Chief Officer CFA) and the CFA board all are in support of the reform.
- I find it quite destructive that the VFBV are constantly misleading their membership with ill-informed suggestions that volunteers will be disadvantaged by the reform. The premier, minister, chief officer and CFA board have all stated that the CFA will not change.

- It is my opinion that the community and rate payers are entitled to a reliable fire service. Residents should not be made to pay a levy hoping that "Volunteers" may or may not turn up to assist in the event of a fire.
- Volunteers on a regular basis do not meet the required Service Delivery Standards set by CFA. This inability to arrive on scene within the standards set by CFA could mean the difference between saving a life. Professional FF's at one of CFA's staffed stations are able to respond within 90 seconds.
- It is commonplace to regularly attend fires and incidents in Corio's primary area and have no volunteer attendance. This includes fully involved structure fires, non-structure fires including car fires, motor vehicle accidents, grass fires, gas leaks and alarms.
- Corio Fire Brigade regularly supports into volunteer areas. Quite often we are first on scene and are left working on our own for the duration of the incident.
- When a CFA volunteer appliance turns out there is no requirement for them to adhere to minimum crewing numbers (the crew may consist of only 1 person being the driver) or hold skills mix appropriate for fire fighting (the crew may not possess any breathing apparatus (BA) wearers. This will delay an internal fire fight within a structure and potentially cost somebody their life.
- Employing all career firefighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity.
- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training, specialist response, response standards and equipment.
- The reform will benefit volunteers as it includes a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades.

Yours sincerely,

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