

The Hon. Gordon Rich Philips MLC
Chair - Fire Services Bill Select Committee 2017

**Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation
Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017**

Hon. Mr Phillips

My submission to you as Chair of the Fire Services Bill Select Committee 2017 is a personal reflection following many conversations and is in support of the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Name: Alfred Mason
Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

CFA Member: Junior volunteer firefighter, Ballarat Brigade May 1974
Senior volunteer firefighter, Ballarat Brigade May 1977
Career firefighter 1982
Senior firefighter 1987
Station officer 1987
Operations officer 2008

Awards National Emergency Medal - Victorian 2009 fires
National Medal 2nd clasp
35 year service badge

I am a passionate member of CFA from the age of 14 to now 56 years of age; I have been fortunate with the opportunity as a firefighter, senior firefighter, station officer, operations officer and acting operations manager to work across the CFA's 5 regions . My current position is operations officer D15 (Ballarat) currently acting operations manager D17 (Horsham)

My operational experience across the state has been with all hazards, working in the emergency services sector in planning, prevention and response activities supporting CFA members and the community, other roles I am a CFA peer and a juvenile fire awareness intervention practitioner.

I have the opportunity to be included in incident management teams as an incident controller and in other positions or as a CFA region agency commander. Operationally and in training I work alongside CFA volunteers and career firefighters, fire services personal from MFB, FFM, interstate and international.

In addressing the following terms of reference Fire Services Bill Select Committee I make my submission to the committee.

- Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria
- Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery
- Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision
- Underlying policy rationale

Following the State Government fire service reform announcement May 19 I have had the opportunity to lead conversations on "reforming Victoria's fire services" the conversation does raise questions and if the answer is not known by me I refer to the Victorian Government Fire Services in Victoria and the CFA Fire Services Reform web pages for clarification.

These conversations have occurred in;

Staff meetings
 Multi agency briefings
 Municipal emergency management planning committee's
 Municipal fire planning committee's
 Fire brigade group meetings
 Fire brigade meetings

The general vibe across the Wimmera is that the fire services reform will have little impact in their communities in the delivery of fire services by CFA and FFM, there are no CFA integrated stations within the Wimmera.

CFA volunteer firefighters will continue to be engaged and participate in fire service delivery, CFA's surge capacity will remain and I have not received feedback from members preparing to leave CFA if the legislation is passed.

There is a general disappointment by CFA volunteer's that the CFA/UFU industrial dispute and now the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 maintains a high negative media focus on CFA, to issues that will have no impact to the majority of volunteers.

The feedback I have received from CFA volunteers they are pleased that the CFA is again becoming a volunteer only organisation.

The firefighters' presumptive rights compensation legislation is overwhelmingly supported by CFA members and the community.

During my conversations with CFA volunteers they generally accept the underlying policy rationale and is supported by no loss of brigades, no loss of volunteers, removal of industrial barriers, \$100 million support package, continued support to brigades by district based operational, administrative support and training staff