

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am Lee Fitzgerald

I currently hold the rank of Leading Firefighter at the Corio Fire Station

I am employed by the Country Fire Authority and have been in the job for 7 years

My Specialist qualifications included 42m ladder platform operator, Hazmat/CBR crew leader, Road and Rope Rescue, BA support operator, Juvenile fire prevention practitioner.

I live in Jan Juc and work in the suburb of Corio. Corio and Norlane has a very large number of structure fires as well as major industry and 4 major hazard facilities including Viva refinery, ELGAS and Terminals. Corio also support to Lara To structure fire and the major prisons.

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

I believe it is most important for my safety and the safety of other firefighters to have 7 firefighters on the fire ground which is an international standard. I need to know that I will have fully qualified and skilled operators backing me up if required at an incident.

It is becoming harder for our CFA volunteers to meet CFAs service delivery times due to other commitments and traveling out of their area for employment. Lara is an example where the current system is not working. (Only meeting service delivery 29% of the time) The Geelong/Lara area population has increased significantly in recent times and outgrown the current CFA volunteer model. All residents pay a fire service levy and should expect a professional fire service not one that might turn up.

The reform will have benefits for both Career Staff and Volunteers. Career staff will receive standardisation in training and equipment as well as safety on the fire ground with 7 fire fighters.

CFA Volunteers will be benefited by funding for station upgrades and new equipment.

Below are examples from my experiences which demonstrates the failures of the current structure:

- Turning out to supporting areas in one appliance and supporting brigade not responding for Greenvale to Bulla
- Appliances turning out with inadequate numbers and skills mix for safety on the fire ground.
- IC from Lara turning out in private vehicle and not responding in a CFA appliance to reported burn off out of control. Before getting on scene turning back appliances.

Yours sincerely,
Lee Fitzgerald