

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am Ben Myers, Level 2 above strength Career Fire fighter, at Corio Fire Station. I have been employed as a fire fighter with CFA since July 28, 2015 when I started my recruit course at VEMTC Craigieburn.

My qualifications include

- 22270VIC- Emergency Medical Response (EMR)
- ENQOGAS001- MSA Sirius. Monitor hazardous atmospheres (MHA)
- Q0002A-Wildfire fire-fighter
- Q0003A- Wildfire- low structure fire fighter
- Q0004A- Wildfire- Structure fire-fighter
- Q0005A- Structure fire fighter

I live in Belmont and I have recently started at Corio, previously Ocean Grove.].

I previously volunteered in my community of Ballan for 18 months before we moved to Geelong.

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

- **A guaranteed second truck on the road.**

In my time at Ocean Grove I had lost count as to how many times a brigade would fail to respond. When a volunteer brigade would turnout there was no guarantee of what qualifications, experience and competencies they would have, given that all of their training is done in their own time over weekends and nights, it makes getting a fully trained crew on the truck in the middle of the day very difficult. A second career truck has the guarantee of being on the road within 90 seconds from the page message and the required crew and qualifications.

This provides the community with a modern fire service in built up areas, where the call outs are too excessive for volunteers to be leaving work and home to respond 24/7. It is crucial to be on scene within 8 minutes to manage the scene effectively.

**Volunteer turnout or surge capacity**

- Career fire fighters are employed in 35 integrated areas. These areas are at high risk and require the services of fire fighters to be dispatched immediately. I do not see how employing all career fire fighters into one service is going to affect the volunteer response. I can only speak for Ocean Grove but the volunteers there were very supportive of us through our EBA dispute and also through this reform. Also stating from their side of things nothing will change for them, they will still respond when they can. Having a truck roll out the door within 90 seconds with a supporting career truck on its way for back up is the best result for the communities that they and their families live in.

My previous residence of Ballan relies on volunteers. There is not a career station within 35km's. They do not work or see career fire fighters so the FRV reform will not affect that station as it is not anywhere near an integrated station, like majority of CFA stations. The CFA volunteers will benefit from extra funding that will be allocated to them.

● **The damage the disputation has caused.**

The dispute has been overwhelming at times. The friendships I once had within my small country town of Ballan disintegrated. Once becoming a career fire fighter I have been called a thug and even been spat towards in the shopping centre of Ocean Grove. Almost once every couple of weeks, 1 person out of our shift would be attacked verbally by a member of the public for being a "thug" or a career fire fighter. We should be proud to wear our uniform but instead I would purposely make sure I was not wearing any CFA displayed uniform if I had to stop at shops on the way home etc.

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

Appliances turning out without appropriate skills mix or qualifications.

Stations failing to respond

Lack of skills and competence on the fire ground

Turning out in private vehicles without fire fighting capabilities

Turning out in incorrect turnout gear. Example- paged structure fire in summer Leopold brigade turned out in wildfire gear because it was too hot for structure gear.

**I have also attached a flyer I received in the mail from Sarah Henderson MP indicating to the public that stations in their area will shut down. An absolute ridiculous statement.**

Yours sincerely,

Ben Myers

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**TORN APART**  
Labor's plan to destroy the CFA and its volunteers

Backed by Bill Shorten and Federal Labor, Premier Daniel Andrews wants to break up the CFA in Corangamite and across Victoria.

Do you support the forced break up of the CFA?  No  Yes  
 Labor claims your local area is unsafe if it is protected only by CFA volunteers.  
 Do you agree?  No  Yes

**Comments**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I am a CFA Volunteer  I am a Career Firefighter Brigade: \_\_\_\_\_

**Issues** Whilst all of these issues are important, please number (from 1 to 4) the four most important issues to you.

<input type="checkbox"/> Making the right economic choices to secure better days ahead	<input type="checkbox"/> Helping small business grow & prosper
<input type="checkbox"/> Tackling crime and the scourge of drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> A sustainable environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Securing Australia's borders	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting seniors & Aged Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Tackling the rising cost of living	<input type="checkbox"/> Investing in innovation & science
<input type="checkbox"/> Securing more & better paying jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully funding the National Disability Insurance Scheme
<input type="checkbox"/> Securing Medicare & the health system	<input type="checkbox"/> Putting downward pressure on housing costs
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing a record investment in schools & education	

**THANK YOU** for letting me know your views.  
 Please contact me if you would like to discuss any of these issues further.

Sarah Henderson MP Federal Member for Corangamite  
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Sarah Henderson MP  
 Federal Member for Corangamite  
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 BELMONT VIC 3216

Dear Resident

**Labor's attack on CFA volunteers is relentless.**  
 Last year, the Turnbull Government amended the Fair Work Act to prevent Labor's hostile takeover of the Country Fire Authority.  
 Now, backed by Bill Shorten and Federal Labor, Daniel Andrews and the militant United Firefighters Union are at it again.  
 In establishing Fire Services Victoria, Labor is abolishing CFA integrated stations including in Belmont and Ocean Grove. This is designed to force CFA volunteers out and tear apart regional CFA brigades.  
**This is further evidence that Labor is determined to destroy the CFA, protect union mates and put Victorian families at risk.**  
**Now, more than ever, our wonderful CFA volunteers need your support.**  
 Please help the Liberals fight for Corangamite's CFA volunteers by filling in and returning this survey. Your voice matters.

*Sarah Henderson*  
 Sarah Henderson MP  
 Federal Member for Corangamite



Herald Sun, 14 June 2017  
 CFA NEWS  
**Bill a risk to firefighting**  
 Reform divisive, unfair  
 "The ability of the CFA to mobilise tens of thousands of volunteers to meet the threat of catastrophic bushfire... is severely threatened by this legislation."  
**JACK RUSH QC**  
 Senior Counsel, Black Saturday Review