

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

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently a volunteer firefighter with the CFA at the Wodonga West Brigade and the Wodonga Fire Brigades Group. I currently hold the rank of Deputy Group Officer and accredited as an Aircraft Officer with the CFA.

I have over 37 years as a member of which

- 27 was with the Wodonga Urban Brigade which is an integrated station with permanent staff.
- During that time, I was an officer for over 12 years with the rank of Lieutenant working with A Permanent Station officer during that time.
- I have been accredited as a BA operator and accredited in Hazmat operations
- I attended both wildfire and structural events
- I have been involved in numerous structural fire fights wearing BA , splash suits and on at least three occasions Gas suits.
- In all these cases I was exposed to various chemical both liquid and gas.
- I have attended incidents where people have been injured and died. I have lifted deceased persons from car accidents and from burnt buildings.
- I have trained at on at least 20 occasions at the Fiskville training Centre which included using water on the flame pad.
- I have used the army traing pad at Bandiana for live flammable liquids training including flaming pits. Most of this work and training was without BA protection.

I believe my experience as a volunteer fire fighter would equal if not be more extensive than some permeant Fire fighters.

I wish to submit the following comments to the committee for their consideration on the negative effect of the above Legislation on myself an CFA volunteers:

**1. Impact of fire services delivery across Victoria**

- I believe the legislation will lead to many existing volunteers leaving the CFA
- I believe that it will be difficult to attract new members into the CFA
- The current services offered by volunteers within CFA will be reduced.

**2. Effect on volunteer's engagement and participation in fire service industry**

- Volunteer will feel that they worth less than permanent staff even though will be exposed to the same risks.
- Volunteer will jot become involved in Structural fire fighting that put them at risk
- The Volunteer feels the government believe their health and life is expendable.
- The government id more worried about money than volunteers lives

**3. Short term and long-term impact on fire services provision**

- A reduction in the number of volunteer joining the CFA
- A reduction in numbers of volunteers attending structural fire fights
- Early retirement of existing volunteers
- A reduction in the respect for the CFA and Board and Management.

**4. Underlying policy rationale**

- The legislation was designed to save money only and does not consider a fair position for all firefighters whether volunteer of permanent.
- It segregates the fire services.
- It indicates that we volunteers do not take the same risk or same exposures to fires.

In conclusion I would like to say that the legislation discriminates against volunteer firefighters who perform the same work as permanent firefighters and ask that the committee recommend that the legislation be voted down and rejected.