

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

1. I am Jarrod Hepburn
 - I hold the position of Firefighter at Corio Fire Station
 - I am employed by the Country Fire Authority (CFA)
 - I began my employment with CFA as a Firefighter on 18th August, 2014
 - The specialist qualifications I hold are:
 - 42m Ladder Platform (Bronto)
 - Teleboom
 - HAZMAT/CBR
 - BA Support operator
 - Low Angle Rescue

2. **I live in** Wandana Heights, a suburb of Geelong **and work at** Corio Fire Station. At Corio our primary area consists of the suburbs of Corio, Norlane, North Shore, Bell Park, Hamlyn Heights, Rippleside, Drumcondra and North Geelong. We also support into areas such as Lara, Bannockburn, Lovely Banks, Geelong City, Stonehaven and Geelong West.
 Corio Fire Station is one of CFA's major stations and for the 2016/2017 financial year attended 1362 calls. We attend the highest number of actual fires within our primary area in the state.

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.
 - The area that I work in Geelong was once categorised as country. However, with a population of 240 000 and growing it is no longer a country area. Areas of Victoria which were classified as country in the mid 1950's are now considered to be metro and cities such as Geelong. The old concept of Staff supporting volunteers simply doesn't have any effect now.
 - The majority of incidents we attend in our primary area we do so without any volunteer response for support. We also attend many support areas where the volunteer brigades fail to turn out. This is totally un-acceptable.
 - With Geelong becoming a large regional centre, various factors such as traffic and work commitments doesn't allow volunteers to turn out in a timely manner
 - Volunteers will benefit from a package to assist with recruitment, station upgrades and new appliances
 - The reform will assist with the standardisation of career training, specialist response and response standards
 - I strongly disagree that Volunteers should be consulted whenever CFA professional FF's have to negotiate a new EBA with the State Government. With the fire services reform this will be avoided.

- I find it totally discouraging that volunteers feel that they are affected by our EBA and that they are prepared to risk community safety before the better of Victorian citizens.
- The VFBV are constantly misleading their membership with ill-informed suggestions that volunteers will be disadvantaged. The premier, minister, chief officer and CFA board have all said CFA volunteers will not be disadvantaged.
- It is my opinion that the community and rate payers are entitled to a reliable fire service that they are paying for through their fire services levy. 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. Several volunteer brigades do not have the required skills mix or experienced members qualified in BA apparatus to conduct an internal search for occupants as well as fire suppression. This is often left for the professional career firefighters to carry out as this is one of the first qualifications we attain to carry out the job that the community is entitled to through their levy and expects of us. To hear volunteers say they are trained to the same high skill level as a professional firefighter is offensive.
- Volunteers on a regular basis do not meet the required SDS set by CFA. This is because in the event that they respond, they need to battle an increased amount of traffic plus adhere to all road rules to respond to their station.
- 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 crucial to protect airways in structural and many other types of fires).
- The appointment of all professional career firefighters to one service will have absolutely no effect to surge capacity or effect how they respond to fires
- Having a guaranteed career staff response can only be an improvement to community safety
- Reform around the response areas of the 35 integrated CFA stations will improve community safety in these areas

Yours sincerely,



Jarrod Hepburn Firefighter

Corio Fire Station – 20-32 Birdwood Ave Norlane Vic 3214



Protecting lives and property



cfa.vic.gov.au