

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

1. My name is Adam Brown and I'm a Professional Firefighter with the CFA.

I am a Level 2 Firefighter with 18 months experience.

2. I live in Tootgarook and work at Mornington Fire Brigade and have also worked at Rowville and Dandenong.
3. I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:
 - I work in Mornington and we support, and are supported by the Volunteer Firefighters of Mornington and the surrounding suburbs of Moorooduc, Mt Eliza and Mt Martha.
 - I have seen their commitment to the community and the wonderful role they play; however being a volunteer means their time is not infinite - a balancing act happens between their commitment to their families, their commitment to their jobs and their commitment to the CFA.
 - At Mornington we rely heavily on the surrounding volunteer brigades, but because of external factors, like the balancing act mentioned above, response to assist us with appropriately qualified personnel is not always guaranteed.
 - This poses a risk to the safety of me, my colleagues and with time critical incidents, the community to which my family is a part of, being local to the Mornington Peninsula.
 - The population on the Mornington Peninsula is growing as the building of Peninsula Link has made the city accessible as a daily commute. The area is now highly urbanised also with the added influx of holiday makers during the tourist season increases the risk to the community.
 - A benefit of the new reforms will see 7 career firefighters dispatched to incidents within 8 minutes, creating a safer working environment than what currently exists for me and my colleagues. When we're at an incident, we're unsure if support is coming and whether there are appropriately qualified people arriving to help.
 - The new reforms also mean that volunteer response will not be affected; the current response arrangements which we work under will still exist adding another level of safety for all firefighters and the community.
 - The state will also maintain its volunteer surge capacity and with the CFA returning to a volunteer organisation, focus and resources shift to concentrate purely on volunteer firefighters.
 - The reforms allow all career staff to unite under one banner, streamlining;
 - Training and incident management
 - Specialist Response
 - Future industrial relations
 - Standardisation of Equipment

4. Below is an example from my experiences which demonstrates the failures of the current structure:

- **Recent Structure Fire – Mt Eliza (call details can be readily supplied from CFA data)**
- Mt Eliza is protected by its own volunteer fire brigade and is supported by the career firefighters at Mornington.
- Due to the nature of the call, we were responded at the same time as Mt Eliza. Upon our arrival, Mt Eliza had not yet responded, and we could see smoke showing from the premises.
- As the incident progressed, I heard on the radio that the Mt Eliza brigade could not respond because there was no-one qualified to drive their fire truck to the incident.
- From this, I knew my colleagues and I would be without backup for some time because if any additional resources were required, they would need to come from further away.
- The incident happened at 7:00am in the morning during the working week, so it is totally understandable as to why this situation occurred. Many of the Mt Eliza volunteer firefighters would have been on their way to work, limiting the amount of crew available to drive their fire truck.
- This in no way denigrates the volunteer firefighters at Mt Eliza; it's just a product and the reality of the current system we work under. The owner of the house seemed confused as to why firefighters from Mornington had arrived to put the fire out and I feel this reaction would be a reflection of the wider community as well.
- There has to be a better system for the safety of the community and firefighters and the Fire Service Reform is crucial to creating that better system.

Yours sincerely,

FF Adam Brown

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Mobile: [REDACTED]