

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Michael Rowell [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 2 July 2017 11:08 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission - INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS
COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL
2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

I am Senior Station Officer Michael Rowell, stationed at Springvale Fire Station, District 8 CFA. I live in Elwood.

I have been employed by CFA as a career fire-fighter for 12 years, 4 years a volunteer prior to that.

My qualifications include the following.

- COURSE IN AUSTRALASIAN INTER-SERVICE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.
- COURSE IN FIRE RESCUE EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE FIRST RESPONDER
- CERTIFICATE IV IN FIRE TECHNOLOGY
- ENDORSE TRENCH RESCUE
- GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF FIRE ENGINEERS
- WILDFIRE FIREFIGHTER
- WILDFIRE-LOW STRUCTURE FIREFIGHTER
- WILDFIRE STRUCTURE FIREFIGHTER
- STRUCTURE - WILDFIRE FIREFIGHTER
- PORTABLE FIRE EQUIPMENT SERVICE OPERATIONS
- CREW LEADER - WILDFIRE
- CREW LEADER - STRUCTURE
- STRIKE TEAM LEADER - WILDFIRE
- OPERATIONS OFFICER
- AIR OBSERVER
- EMR FIRST RESPONDER
- TRENCH RESCUE OPERATOR
- USAR OPERATOR
- STAGING AREA MANAGER
- GROUND OBSERVER
- SITUATION OFFICER
- PLANNING OFFICER
- CERTIFICATE IV IN TRAINING & ASSESSMENT
- FIRE INVESTIGATOR

In addition I have received;

- National Medal
- National emergency medal –Victorian 2009 fires
- 15 years CFA medal

I grew up in central Victoria; my Grandfather was a long-time CFA Volunteer, Captain and group officer and my father is also a long term CFA volunteer in Tooborac, Central Victoria.

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

- Primarily the reform will mean for better community safety and fire protection for the state of Victoria.
- All Victorians pay a fire service levy and deserve reform ensures the levy is providing the best service to the community possible. A progressive service too, for a progressive state.
- Having all career fire-fighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity. CFA volunteers can continue to volunteer from any CFA station as they currently do.
- The reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – it has no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response – such as my former brigade Tooborac, it will not be affected at all.
- The 35 areas are now highly urbanised – high residential and other risks (such as EMR) with volunteers struggling to turnout.
- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment. This will aid fire ground operations. Having all career staff being employed by one fire service will save costs in long term with equipment, training, resourcing for one full time service rather than two.
- The damage the disputation in the workplace has had on my workplace and any my family cannot be measured. The topic of CFA and the ridiculous suggestion of UFU takeover are continually in the media, social media and a topic around the kitchen table at work and at home. It's very draining, and sad as I love me job and love serving my community and state of Victoria. However, throughout my career the fire service has been in some form of dispute.
- The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA; and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades.

Below are just a few examples from my experiences which demonstrate the failures of the current structure:

- Neighbouring volunteer brigades do not have ability to respond during daytimes so nearby staff stations have escalated response during day times to cover assignment areas. Often these brigades fail to turnout at all.

- The current regime also allows brigades to decide who supports them; which is not necessarily the nearest brigade (which is the logical method and what the community needs/expects) as due to conflict/angst amongst persons/brigades sometimes the closest brigade is overlooked.
- Unfortunately volunteers due to work, family or life commitments are finding it harder to volunteer. I've seen the numbers of operational volunteer member decline over my time in the CFA.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Rowell



Michael Rowell GFireE, BCom

Senior Station Officer (Fire Investigator)

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Protecting lives and property

<image005.png>

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