Kirra Vanzetti

From:	Travis Smith ████████████████
Sent:	Monday, 3 July 2017 12:56 PM
To:	LCSC
Subject:	Submission - Inquiry into Fire Services Legislation Amendment

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

My name is Travis Smith and I am currently employed by the CFA as a Station Officer at Caroline Springs Fire Station. I have been a Career Firefighter for 11 years and in this time I have gained significant experience in both rural and urban environments, including the current interface between MFB and CFA response areas.

I have also been a volunteer with the CFA for over 15 years spending time at both Sunbury and Bulla Fire Brigades.

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

My role as the Officer in Charge makes me accountable for the safety of all persons on the fireground both civilian and Emergency Services. This means I should have the appropriate resources available to me in order to carry out this function. I require a minimum of two (2) appliances and seven (7) crew (with Breathing Apparatus qualifications) in order to provide a safe work environment. I also require this a minimum, in order to commit crews to perform search and rescue and remove any civilians who may be trapped or in immediate danger.

In saying that, its not about what I want or need, its what the community absolutely deserves.

As both a volunteer and career firefighter, I do not see how employing all career firefighters in one fire service will affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity. I believe it will in fact enhance Volunteers ability to provide surge capacity over busy periods. The fact that the reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary
response areas means no effect on other Volunteer Brigades or response during fire danger periods.

These 35 areas are now highly urbanised. In Caroline Springs alone we have some of Victorias highest risk facilities. This includes the Metropolitan Remand Centre, Dame Phyllis Frost Womens Prison, Ravenhall Prison, Port Phillip Prison, bulk freezer storage with over 50,000 litres of Ammonia on site, multiple Primary and Secondary schools and densely populated residential areas bordering the rural interface and grasslands.

Under the current system we have one (1) appliance with four (4) career firefighters responsible for this area. We are supported by volunteers who do a great job when they respond. However, this response is not guaranteed and the skills profile of volunteers does not require them to have qualifications such as breathing apparatus. This means they are restricted to a few tasks and as the Incident Controller I now

have to respond another truck from neighbouring towns/areas in order to complete critical tasks on scene.

This on-going dispute has had a significant impact on me, my family and my work colleagues. But more importantly it has had a significant impact on the community, who are not getting the highest level of service from our emergency services. Volunteers and career firefighters do a fantastic job working together cohesively but under the current system this is becoming more and more difficult and both deserve a safe work environment where we can provide a level of service that the community deserves.

Thank-you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Station Officer Travis Smith
Country Fire Authority - Caroline Springs Fire Station

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