

30 June 2017

The Secretary  
Legislative Council Select Committee  
Parliament House Spring St  
East Melbourne Vic 3002.

Re: Inquiry into the Firefighters  
Presumptive Rights Compensation + Fire  
Services Legislation Amendment (Reform)  
Bill 2017.

Dear Committee,

my name is  
) and yesterday I celebrated  
36 yrs as an operational F/F at CFA after  
starting as a 16 yr old in a rural fire  
brigade as a Volunteer.

Throughout this time, I have strived for  
improvement and growth and was rewarded  
by achieving a position as a career F/F  
in 1994 commencing @ , an Integrated  
station at CFA.

I have taken the time to pen these  
words in support of reform for the fire  
services as @ the moment we (CFA) are  
broken. Various events and circumstances  
have lead us to this point in time and  
what is proposed is Generational change,  
thus it is important that I contribute.

I consider myself as a moderate person and am dismayed @ what we have become. This warring that is playing out in the media is eroding Public confidence in the Organisation and its ability, however more importantly it is having a direct impact on individuals and their families. I qualify this by the following:

- \* As a volunteer, I attended a multitude of local fires and incidents
- \* Was on the ground on Ash Wednesday @ Belgrave Heights.
- \* Looked after the communities of Bright + surrounds during the 86 fires and
- \* The Warburton fires in the early 90's.

As a career ~~F/F~~ and Officer.

- \* On average attended 200 fires and incidents per year
- \* was on the ground protecting the communities in the Dandenongs in 96
- \* Was the "Watchroom Operator" receiving + processing triple 000 calls @ the turn of the Millennium
- \* Attended all of the campaign fires in the early 2000's.
- \* Was a Brigade liaison officer looking after Kunglake + Kunglake West in 2009
- \* Participated as both Safety Officer and Operations Officer @ Hazelwood and finally
- \* Am proud to have assisted in recruiting and training some career ~~F/F~~'s inclusive of women.

Yet!

The sum of my 36 yrs of community service, is that "I am a Union Thug who is overpaid for the little work that I do".

What is worse is that as an employee I have lost my legitimate right for my bargaining agent to negotiate on my behalf without the interference of a group of people acting in a volunteer capacity, all for political gain.

The time for some sort of change has arrived for the betterment of the community. You would expect that as a Career Officer that I would be able to respond and provide a service that my community both expects and deserves, however this is not the case. I state to you as fact:

- \* Smaller Fire Brigades (Volunteers) would rather have other Volunteer Fire Brigades attend to Alarms or fires in Structures in appliances that are not suitable rather than have Career F/F attend.
- \* I have been personally chastised by a local Volunteer Captain @ an MVA on the freeway because I deployed hydraulic equipment to allow access for Paramedics to access a casualty to save his life rather than wait the extra 7 minutes for his Volunteer crew + rescue to arrive! and the worst of all
- \* I have been constrained in a Fire Station with a full compliment of career F/F's listening to an Incident out on the freeway (a road that my family travelled daily)

where after approx 20 mins, the local Captain came up on the Radio and asked "Oh Victim, do I have to get the truck and respond to this call?"

The reply from the Dispatcher was that there was no emergency services on scene yet so Yes!  
→ A young person died in that accident and I wasn't able to respond and possibly help.

Career F/F's need to be allowed to respond & provide a service to the best of their abilities, not be constrained by Ego's.

You as Parliamentarians will determine if this legislation is the best solution, however I urge you to make change happen. For the interest and wellbeing of the individuals but more importantly because the community requires it.

I have chosen to hand write this so that you can appreciate that it is from a person, a community member and career F/F, not necessarily from a representative body. This is my attempt to allow me the freedom to be employed with dignity, the Volunteers to remain and serve when they can with dignity yet for the community to be awarded with an Emergency service that can be more efficient than it currently is - because they pay for it

Regards

Note! I ask that this be confidential due to my reference to a fatality.