

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 1:02 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Russell Marshall

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E: [REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I wish to make this submission in support of the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

I have been employed as a Leading Firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade for 8 years. During some of this time I have been stationed at fire stations such as Somerton and Greensborough, on the boundary of the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) and the CFA area. These are areas where there has been significant growth in recent years, as seen in the 2016 Census. I would like to state that Volunteers are essential to the fire services in Victoria and they do a valuable job, however the volunteer model is not adequate in an urban environment. It is the Volunteer Model that is the issue and not the volunteers themselves. No longer do we have volunteers who are farmers working the land of which they have signed up to protect. People in urban areas generally work some distance from where they live and the types of fires that occur are not grass and bush fires but structure fires. These types of fires require a faster response and the volunteer Model alone is not adequate in urban areas. This bill will still allow volunteers to respond as they currently do and their response will be essential should Career firefighters be unavailable due to the increased number of fire calls in these areas.

As a metropolitan firefighter I have peace of mind that I will be supported by a minimum of 7 firefighters on the fire ground, however my colleagues in the CFA do not have this basic workplace safety standard in most areas. If you choose to pass this bill, the areas that were zoned as country areas will then fall under a metropolitan fire response thus allowing for a greater minimum response. This will enhance the safety standard for all career firefighters by having 7 on the fire ground in areas where career firefighters operate. There has been some commentary that this applies to any fire in Victoria or that volunteers will have to wait for career firefighters. This is false.

If there was any other workplace where there were so many dangerous and unknown variables such as structural collapse or flashover (full fire involvement of a room) where employees were working, then 7

people in attendance wouldn't even be up for debate so why are we allowing it to happen in the firefighting industry? Please pass this bill and end the criticism, judgement and vilification of career firefighters.

A major concern for me is the huge emphasis in the media and by many politicians regarding the way volunteers might be affected. Many opponents of these reforms will say they are "fighting for volunteers" I would like to know who is fighting for the community? After all that's the purpose of the fire brigade, protect the community. There is little Emphasis on how these changes will improve safety and protection for the community. I assure you that if you ask the average person they don't care who arrives to put out the fire just that it is done quickly. These expectations are why reform is needed.

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File1:

File2:

File3: