

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Robert Ivers and I work as a career firefighter with the Country Fire Authority stationed at Rosebud Fire Station on the Mornington Peninsula. I am 56 years old and started as a career fire fighter in 1993 (24 years service).

I was also a volunteer with Mt.Eliza CFA for 8 years.

I currently hold the rank of Senior Station Officer and a qualified Operations Officer and hold many specialist qualifications.

I was awarded the National Medal for diligent service.

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

Reasons why as a Senior Station Officer and an Incident Controller that it is important to have guaranteed backup with two trucks with at least 7 competent firefighters to be dispatched within 8 minutes.

Below are examples from my experiences which demonstrates the failures of the current structure:

On the 10th of August 2016 at **05:55hrs** I was working at Rosebud Fire Station when we were paged to attend an undefined fire at Coleman Cr Rosebud West Melways 165 K5.

This address is in Rosebud primary response area and supported by Rye Fire Brigade.

Rosebud Pumper 1 was on scene at **05:59hrs** with myself **SSO Ivers** as Incident Controller and 3 experienced Firefighters and 1 new inexperienced recruit.

It was reported that a person from within the building made the 000 call but it was unsure to the 000 call taker what was on fire.

On our arrival I saw heavy black smoke issuing from the building and it was clear that the house was on fire. I spoke to a couple of people out the front of the property and they stated that there should be a woman living there with young children.

My first actions were to conduct a perimeter size up of the building to establish a plan of action and to brief the crew of my plan. We were unable to gain entry through the front or side doors, but I managed to kick in the laundry door where 1 crew consisting of 2 firefighters wearing Breathing Apparatus (BA Crew) made entry into the the rear of the building.

At **06:07hrs** I contacted VicFire our communications department to establish if any volunteer brigades were responding and their reply was no, so I requested that they re-page the volunteers.

At **06:14hrs** the Rosebud BA Crew located a 50 year old woman within the building suffering smoke inhalation and in cardiac arrest. After carrying the woman outside to waiting ambulance officers they went back inside the building to search for any other casualties.

At this point in time, **19 minutes** after both Rosebud and Rye brigades had been paged to this fire **NO volunteer support** had arrived on scene.

At **06:16hrs** with still no volunteer support, **21 minutes** after both Rosebud and Rye brigades had been paged, I requested another Pumping Appliance be dispatched.

By **06:38hrs** volunteer members from both Rosebud and Rye had arrived on scene and were deployed as extra BA Crews to conduct secondary internal searches inside the building.

43 minutes after the fire call was paged to both volunteers and career staff, I was able to deploy a second BA crew to search the building.

Conclusion

No other casualties were found in the building and the house was extensively damaged by fire. The woman died in hospital from injuries sustained from the fire 1 week after being rescued by Rosebud career staff, and treated on scene by ambulance officers.

We will never know if the woman would have survived if we had 2 fire appliances and at least 7 competent firefighters on scene within 5 minutes from dispatch of this call, as Rosebud career staff were. But what I do know is that we would have been able to gain entry via the front doors, saving vital time, as the woman was found a short distance inside the front door. I also would have had sufficient crews to deploy a 2nd BA Crew to help search the building. This would have given the woman a greater chance of survival.

Please find attached 2 Pages of evidence to support my claims stated above.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss any part of this submission further,

yours sincerely

Robert Ivers

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