

**Fire Services Select Committee Submission 2017**4<sup>th</sup> July 2017**INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Greg Doyle and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for 15 years holding the rank of Leading Fighter. I am trained to operate all types of appliances in the MFB. I have been stationed in the Western Zone for all of my 15 years.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for allowing myself as a professional MFB firefighter this chance to make a contribution to the process and write to express my full support for the proposed fire service reforms.

I have been stationed in Deer Park for over 12 years now and have worked side by side with fulltime CFA crews on countless occasions.

I have also had the opportunity to work alongside volunteers on many occasions at all different types of fire calls, including house fires, car fires and more commonly grass fires.

While the skills and qualifications of the fulltime CFA professionals are an equal to my own it has been perpetrated in the **media that the volunteers are all trained to the same level as professional firefighters. This is not the case and has been a lie told by Politian's and members of volunteer organisations with other agendas.**

Volunteers do an amazing job and are a vital part of an extended fire service.

Victoria's fire service boundaries have not changed for 60 years.

I work fulltime in Deer Park and have seen an enormous in flux of residents and business in that area. The work load on a volunteer has increased as well as the need to be trained in all areas of fire fighting. We cannot expect a volunteer service to maintain safe standards under these conditions.

Currently within the MFB we have a rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional firefighters on two trucks in urban areas.

**This can only be guaranteed in the MFB district.**

I have been a resident of Hoppers Crossing (Wyndham) for 43 years and my family **does not have this protection**, yet its growth and population would be far greater than that of Deer Park.

This is because under the current outdated boundaries Hoppers Crossing is classed as a **“Country Town”**.

This puts my family’s life, the community, property and the fire fighters themselves at risk because there are no guarantees of an 8 minute response, two truck turn out with 7 professional fire fighters attending.

We instead ask volunteers. Whose training is varied (not all can respond to a house fires), work full time jobs already, could be responding from home (via the station) to try to carry this ever increasing work load.

It is vital that crews arrive on scene within 8 minutes for the best chance of a positive outcome. Any delay in this will result in the loss of life and greater loss of property and any delay in the second truck responding endangers the lives of firefighters.

MFB has a 90 second turnout from station.

CFA volunteers and their Brigades are allowed 6 minutes to answer the page from VIC Fire. (A house will “flash over” soon after 8 minutes. Point of no return.)

The time for change in these 35 urban areas is now.

My family and others within these community’s deserve the same level of protection offered to those within the MFB district.

As a professional firefighter I have been performing our EMR (Emergency Medical Response) role for my entire career, attending hundreds of calls per year.

We attend all priority 0 calls within the MFB district along with Ambulance Victoria. Calls range from heart attacks, suicides, drug over doses, SIDS cases. We are highly trained in airway management, use of oxygen and defilation.

**Hundreds of people are alive today due to the hard efforts of MFB fire fighters.**

This training and skill is not offered to volunteers. With the changes to the boundaries in the 35 urban areas, this skill would be spread further to help Ambulance and the community.

A risk I have excepted since I started as a firefighter was the possibility that I may contract cancer as a result of performing my job in service of the community.

The part I have always struggled with was the prospect of trying to explain to my wife and kids that I would be expected to identify which job it was that I had attended (over my hopefully 30 plus year career) that had caused it.

This reform and Bill will recognise that cancer is an occupational hazard for firefighters.

Presumptive cancer legislation reverses the onus of proof so that firefighters can access their entitlements as they would for any other work relate illness or injury.

The Bill also extends coverage for volunteers who have been diagnosed with one of the listed cancers.

Both volunteers and professional firefighters place their lives at risk and this Bill will help ease the suffering of both the individual and their families.

**The MFB firefighters have had enough of being vilified by their management, media and certain Politian's.**

Volunteers the community and firefighters deserve a modern, safe and functioning fire service. The current system is outdated and in need of desperate change.

You and your committee are charged with this responsibility and need to look beyond party Politics and grudges and realise what is truly best for Victoria is **Fire service Reform Now**

Kind regards

MFB LFF Greg Doyle

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]