

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

Inquiry into the fire-fighters presumptive rights compensation and fire service legislation amendment reform bill 2017.

My name is Artemis Palechoritis currently a level 1 professional fire-fighter employed by the CFA and have only been in the job as a professional fire-fighter for 7 months. I started my career at Wangaratta fire station which I worked for a period of 6 months and now currently transferred to Eltham fire station.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services due to the following:

When I started working at Wangaratta fire station I was very excited starting my new career and I didn't really know all the facts regarding the fire service. However I quickly realized the importance of the guaranteed backup of 2 trucks with at least 7 professional fire fighters on the fire ground after I transferred to Eltham fire station.

Below is my example from my limited experience which demonstrates the failure of the current structure:

On the 14/03/2017 at 13:56:55 job number 626714 internal structural fire in living room. Turning out to the job was a senior station officer, leading fire fighter, qualified fire fighter and myself level 1 fire fighter. We arrived at the structural fire, started our fire fighting tactics which we managed to extinguish the fire in a reasonable amount of time, search the entire house for any casualties and fire extension. Luckily no casualties or further fire was found. Once all this was completed and we started to do overhaul and salvage (final stages of the fire fight) the supporting volunteers arrived and started to help us. I didn't think much of this at the time only until I have transferred to Eltham fire station which from the

first job that I have turned out on the 30/06/2017 at 03:49:10 job number 639410, we had another truck with professional fire fighters from the MFB arrived at a job the same time we did. This made me feel more supported & more comfortable attending this job knowing others are ready to assist immediately if things got worse on the fire ground.

This personal example shows me that we didn't have enough support in Wangaratta on job 626714 while the fire was on going; we didn't have enough support during the search and rescue but had plenty of support during the clean-up stage of the fire. I absolutely appreciated the help during the clean-up stage of the fire, however the dangerous and most important part of the fire to only have 2 professional fire-fighters inside the structure without any back up of other fire fighters ready to come in and help or assist us, shows me that the current structure of the fire service isn't the way high population areas need to be supported going into the future.

Now that I am fully aware of the fire service I am receiving as a citizen at my current resident of Lalor Vic a high highly urbanised & high residential risk area, which is a full volunteer response CFA Epping fire brigade and only after a period of 4 -6 minutes without a turn out from the volunteer station it will go to the next adjoining brigade Thomastown (a 24 hour 7 day a week 365 day a year, MFB station or South Morang fire brigade CFA station) which are a further 4 to 6 minutes away (totalling 8 to 12 minutes) to respond to a fire that may be at my house or my neighbour's house for that matter.

This isn't only a concern for my house or my next door neighbours, this effect thousands of citizens in the outer high growth suburbs of Melbourne. By supporting the change to the fire service legislation amendment reform Bill, this will allow better response

times to citizens by a 24/7 service guaranteed response in 90 seconds (turn out time for professional fire fighters), put more firefighters as staff and will keep the community at a much higher level of safety. Also this will not affect the turn out times that volunteer brigades do currently, it will just make the community safety better with greater numbers with staff & volunteers combined. I cannot see how this reform will not help in the progress of making the outer Melbourne communities more safer and more at ease knowing they are been given a service in the most timely fashion, when time is the crucial part to saving lives.

I hope this and may other examples find their way into the eyes of people in parliament or assistant clerk committees or politicians to shine the light on a service that needs improvement for a better future.

Yours sincerely,

Artemis Palechoritis Level 1 CFA professional fire fighter

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