

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

I am Adam Small and I currently hold the rank of Leading Firefighter at Dandenong Fire Station employed by the Country Fire Authority.

I have been a career FF for 15 years starting my recruit course at Fiskville in 2002. In this time I have worked across the state at the different integrated fire stations within the CFA.

I currently hold the following increments Heavy Rescue, Ladder Platform, Teleboom, Aerial Pumper, Rope Technician, Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue and EMR.

I have been awarded the National Medal, National Emergency Medal (Victorian 2009 fires) and a 20 year service medal for the CFA.

I currently live in The Basin where I am also a volunteer member. I have been a volunteer at The Basin CFA for 28 years. I joined the brigade as a junior and then moved into the senior brigade.

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

- I work at Dandenong. This is the CFA's busiest station attending approximately 2500 fire calls a year. With the appliances we have on station the career staff support staff and volunteer brigades for some distance. This is why it's important to have a guaranteed back up. Guaranteed that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes.
- With a guaranteed response the community is offered better safety and protection. Having 7 professional firefighters dispatched means that fire ground operations can commence without the fear of no support.
- Volunteer turn out or surge capacity would not be affected by employing all career firefighters in one fire service. Given that the volunteers will be co-located at the existing integrated stations and volunteer stations will remain as is.
- Volunteer support will be maintained with operational firefighters. (OO's OM's etc being employed by FRV but continuing their roles through an arrangement with the CFA)
- That the reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas. No effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response.

- These 35 areas are now highly urbanised – high residential and other risks.
- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training, specialist response, response standards and equipment.
- The damage this disputation in the workplace has had on my own mental wellbeing and my families needs to stop. The fire service reform will do this.
- The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA and include funding for volunteer station upgrades.

Below are examples from my experience which demonstrates the failures of the current structure.

- I have been at confirmed fires with our minimal staff crews waiting for volunteer support to arrive. When they do arrive a lot of the time they don't have the correct skills. For example they can only wear breathing apparatus outdoors - they can't go into a burning structure.
- That the OIC of a volunteer appliance is often the driver. They can't manage a fire scene while operating the appliance.
- Where responding to a fire and the volunteer support fail to respond. Then an additional brigade needs to be paged causing a delay in the second appliance arriving on scene.

I am happy to provide you with any more information if required.

Yours sincerely
Adam Small
Leading Firefighter
CFA
