

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

Inquiry into the firefighters' presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

I am Leading Firefighter [REDACTED] from Ocean Grove Fire Station; I have been employed by the CFA for 6 years. Prior to becoming a career firefighter I was a volunteer firefighter for 12 months.

I am writing this submission **IN SUPPORT** of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

- I believe the current fire services system is out dated and is putting the community and firefighters trying to protect them at risk. The reform will modernise the fire service and I believe improve community and firefighter safety.
 - I worked at Hoppers Crossing Fire Station for 5 years. During this time there were only 3 firefighters on shift at any one time. Hoppers Crossing is surrounded by volunteer brigades, with the next closest integrated station with career firefighters being Point Cook, about 10km away.
 - Volunteers do the best they can, but are often unavailable to respond due to work commitments, being at the shops, going out for dinner, going to see a movie, having some drinks at the pub, being away on holidays, visiting friends. This is not their fault, like you and I, they have a life also. When a brigade fails to respond, after approx. 5 minutes they page the next brigade, and so on. This often leaves career firefighters with delayed support, which puts the community and us at risk.
 - I have attended many house fires where I have entered a building on my own to suppress the fire and search for occupants prior to support from other brigades arriving. This goes against CFA procedures and puts my life at risk, but when there are persons missing and people screaming for you to help, what are we supposed to do? One suburb closer to the city (MFB area) and the community gets 2 fire trucks respond within 8 minutes 95% of the time.

- The reform will create an Independent review board to establish whether current MFB boundaries need to be changed or altered.
 - These boundaries haven't changed in over 60 years, which I believe is astounding considering the enormous population growth in Victoria, in particular the outer metropolitan areas.

- Many urban areas such as Dandenong, Springvale and Hoppers Crossing are still designated as 'country', why shouldn't the community and Industry in these areas get the same response as areas within the MFB boundary?
- The reform will allow for a fair and safe Enterprise Bargaining Agreement to be negotiated.
 - This industrial dispute has been going on for too long. It has affected morale and career firefighters are sick of being demonised by some political parties and media outlets.

In conclusion, I feel that the community deserves a modernised fire service, the current model doesn't reflect population growth and needs to change. My family need me to come home to them safely after each shift, and this reform will not only improve community safety but also the safety of firefighters too.

I wish to keep this personal submission confidential.

Yours sincerely,



Ocean Grove Fire Brigade, 5-11 Shell Road, Ocean Grove, Vic 3226

Protecting lives and property



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