

**Kirra Vanzetti**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 9:20 AM  
**To:** LCSC; [REDACTED]

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

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

Thankyou very much for your time, consideration and evaluation of my email, in support of the above reform legislation. I understand there are many views and opinions on this proposed reform, however Victoria stands to benefit from improved service delivery, along with increased firefighter safety as a result.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a CFA employee, currently stationed as a Firefighter at Traralgon Fire Station. Whilst I have only been a career firefighter for 1 year, I previously served as a CFA volunteer for 18 years including a period of 10 years at Caroline Springs (during its inception and integration from wholly volunteer to integration with career staff).

I currently hold Cert III Fire & Emergency Operations, along with diplomas and other Cert IV's relating to my previous professional occupation as an Insurance Underwriter / Broker.

I have been awarded the National Emergency Medal for service over Black Saturday, National Service Medal for over 15 years diligent service (held numerous volunteer positions of office at Brigade and Group levels), along with a CFA Service Medal for long service.

I previously lived in Hillside (suburb adjoining Caroline Springs, Melbourne for approx 10 years, with a regional relocation to Inverloch, Victoria around 5 years ago.

I currently commute to work in Traralgon, around 1 hours drive from home. I am actively involved as a volunteer Committee member and qualified Instructor, with a local Windsurfing and Judo club.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons: Guaranteed firefighter response numbers: during my time as a volunteer in the Hillside/Caroline Springs area, I experienced an alarmingly high level of times where volunteers were unavailable to respond, or had delayed response times (above the 4 minute Service Delivery Standard for our Brigade).

When we integrated to a Volunteer and Staff model, whilst we then knew that we had staff dispatched within 90 seconds, at that stage the staffing level only consisted of 3, a Station Officer, one Leading Firefighter and one Firefighter. If they were the first on scene, with the Officer managing and evaluating the incident, safety and timeliness were affected with only 2 staff to undertake firefighting activities. This also left them exposed operating without a safety backup team.

I certainly owe it to my family, to do everything I can to return home safely each day, so I can continue to perform my role as a firefighter.

Experience shows that having 7 dispatched firefighters greatly enhances the safety and operational capabilities of crews, that leads to greater control of the fire to room / area of origin, along with increased survivability of occupants.

Having volunteered and now worked at two of the 35 integrated CFA stations, I can personally attest to the benefits of increased fireground safety, community benefits of increased protection through guaranteed and enhanced response times. Along with the training provided and undertaken by volunteers. Our training standards at Caroline Springs increased dramatically as a result of a highly dedicated shift (our Brigade had an entire platoon dedicated to Staff & Volunteer training and development). I was very pleased to have been the volunteer Lieutenant working with a Senior Station Officer, Leading Firefighter and Firefighter, along with 10 dedicated volunteer training committee members.

One major experience I would like to highlight is the incredible urban growth of Melbourne. Within the space of only a few years, I personally witnessed around 50,000 people move into Caroline Springs and surrounding suburbs. As a volunteer at the time we went from around 200-300 calls per year to approximately 800-900. Let alone the increased commercial and industrial risks with (now) two large prisons and a remand centre.

This led to increased interactivity and operational capacity with the MFB, however the two services had different modes of operation, resourcing and sometimes approaches to training and fireground operations. Having one professional service, would ensure that all career responding members would have the same approach to all aspects, greatly increased safety and response to our communities.

I strongly believe that the proposed model will not affect the surge capacity and availability of the remaining CFA brigades. As it currently stands only 35 of over 1200 stations are currently integrated, with those 35 mostly having working relationships with volunteers and career staff.

Certainly anything that provides a more modern and up to date response system, has to be in the interests of all Victorians, not just a select few who can afford / choose to live in certain areas.

As per the Governments proposition, any impacts of resourcing or locality, can be catered for as part of the \$100M package. Surely this is a fantastic time for the minority of affected volunteers to obtain updated stations, appliances and operational equipment to better serve their community.

One of the key components of CFA is the provision of its management staff (Operations Officers and Operations Managers), who provide diverse roles over the state.

These people will undoubtedly continue to provide their capacity as functional managers of career staff, but will also continue to provide their experience and functionality as catchment officers (Operations Officers managing groups of Brigades).

During times of industrial dispute whilst I was at Caroline Springs, we as a volunteer body would choose to respectfully remain silent, as we were aware the issue was not involving us. I presided as Lieutenant over 3 such disputes and there was never any matter that was directed to or involved a volunteer.

I have seen the 'wear and tear' this has taken on senior career firefighters who are tired of the constant barrage and undermining of their professionalism and motives for this campaign. In fact there are some staff, that have only ever known dispute their entire CFA careers.

Its time to help make this stop. Its time to return Victoria its reputation as a modern, safe fire state. Its time to show the world that we can work with all bodies to improve.

Whilst I am happy for my submission to be included in considerations and reports, I respectfully request that my contact and personal details be omitted.

Yours sincerely,

  
Firefighter  
Traralgon CFA Fire Station

This email is for official use only. The information in this communication is privileged and confidential, intended only for the use of the individual or entity named. If you are not the intended recipient, any dissemination, copying or use of the information is strictly prohibited. Any personal information in this email must be handled in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and applicable laws. If you have received this transmission in error please inform us by return email and then delete it immediately from your system.