

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

Inquiry into the Fire-fighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

My name is Alan Drury I am a Station Officer employed by the MFB for just over 35 years and have attained many qualifications over my career. For the past 4 years I have worked in the Emergency Medical Services Department of the MFB where I interact with operations on a daily basis and oversee and coordinate all training for fire-fighters and recruit fire-fighters.

I live in the Westmeadows area and work out of the Burnley training complex.

I have been involved with numerous sporting clubs over many years. I am currently President of the MFB Sporting Clubs a position I have held for 3 years and where I actively encourage interaction and participation between MFB and CFA fire-fighters in both a sporting and social environment.

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

- Throughout my career in the MFB I have been stationed in both the Northern and Western suburbs, where I responded to fire calls in areas with CFA appliances where they had issues with, dispatch times and crewing numbers which impacted greatly on my ability to perform my job in a safe manner. Not only the welfare of my crew and myself was compromised the inability to contain the fire/incident was also jeopardised which has an economic impact on the community we protect. Guaranteed backup and the ability to have at least 7 fire-fighters on the fire ground in 2 trucks within 8 minutes is something that is imperative in the year 2017 and something that is long overdue. In serving the community in such potentially dangerous environments I have always adopted the mindset that my crew has been loaned to me for the duration of the shift and that one of my jobs is to return them home safely at the end of the shift and these proposed changes will assist me in being able to do exactly that.
- Employing all career fire-fighters in one fire service will have no impact on volunteer fire-fighters themselves or any impact on surge capacity for the state, where volunteer involvement is absolutely critical.

- Volunteer fire-fighters will be supported at all times by career fire-fighters employed by FRV and in addition to this, the Government has allocated a large amount of funding for the CFA to assist with its continued development and training of its volunteers.
- The 35 areas that will be impacted by this reform have become highly urbanised and the residents occupying these areas expect and deserve a level of fire and EMR coverage that is appropriate for the year 2017.
- The introduction of the EMR program back in 2000 throughout the metropolitan fire district has seen many hundreds of lives saved through the direct involvement of the fire service. Ambulance Victoria's own statistical data shows that survival rates from cardiac arrest has increased dramatically over this period of time. The Victorian community quite rightfully expects and deserves this same level of service and chance of survival as is afforded to community members living within the metropolitan fire district.
- This reform will assist with standardisation for all career fire-fighters in the areas of training, specialist response capabilities and equipment.
- All career fire-fighters employed in one organisation allows for a much more cohesive network between fire-fighters to occur on a state level, which also allows for a greater level of personal development and placement throughout the state of Victoria.
- The continual level of disputation between MFB management and fire-fighters has been disgraceful and relentless. To be treated in such a manner since the early 1990's has seen a whole generation of fire-fighters galvanised as one, leaving only respect for the uniform itself and nothing but contempt for the people in management who wear it. The life of a fire-fighter is one that comes with great reward and allows you to develop friendships that last forever and for you all to work in an environment where your work colleagues are like family. As a fire-fighter of 35 years plus experience I have witnessed many highs and many lows throughout my career and at times this can take a very heavy toll on you in both a work and personal environment. I have seen things and smelt things that I can never forget and there has been times when I have been out with family on a social occasion and my mind takes me back to a memory that causes me great distress. I have had days where I have burst into tears whilst driving the car or out walking for no apparent reason. I had 5 months off work on sick leave in 2016 to address these issues and throughout that time MFB management continued its barrage of relentless attacks on its

fire-fighting workforce across all communication mediums. During my time as a career fire-fighter I would estimate that somewhere between 20 -25 serving career fire-fighters have committed suicide and an untold amount have died from cancer related illness.

As a fire-fighter I get to see people in their time of need and when they are at their most vulnerable and as fire-fighters we are trained to assess, manoeuvre, mitigate, and remove any and all dangers that are present, whilst at all times reassuring, calming and communicating with the community that we so proudly serve.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have been afforded to make comment in relation to these matters, as I believe these proposed changes are long overdue and will deliver a much more vibrant cohesive fire service to communities throughout Victoria and the Government is to be applauded for proposing this Legislation.

Yours sincerely

Alan Drury
MFB fire-fighter #3583

