

Kirra Vanzetti

From: ARCUS, Bradley [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 10:42 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: FW: submission: FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

From: ARCUS, Bradley
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 8:32 AM
To: COWLING, Rachel
Subject: FW: submission

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Brad Arcus, I have served a period of over 31 years with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I have been a Station Officer for the past 27 years. Currently I am serving in the capacity of Recruit Training Instructor at The Victorian Emergency Management Centre (VEMTC), Craigieburn.

I have lived in the northern suburb of Epping for 27 years before moving out to Doreen where we currently reside, just over 6 years ago.

I wish to express my full support for the proposed reform of the Fire Services for the following reasons:

1. As a professional Firefighter, it is absolutely imperative that we have a minimum of 7 fully qualified firefighters and 2 trucks dispatched with the timeframe of 8 minutes, This provides the absolute minimum required to conduct *safe* firefighting operations as per operational procedures. These operational procedures are in place to provide the minimum safety standards for firefighters as well as provide a reasonable number of crew to *initially* combat a typical house fire and safely conduct a search and rescue of occupants. I don't think it is unreasonable to expect we should uphold those procedures to provide a safe working environment for our crews as well as an efficient service for the community.
2. Response times in the event of a fire or incident, I am sure you would agree are critical. A response time of more than 8 minutes is simply unacceptable, placing both the community and responding firefighters at risk. Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'. As previously stated I live in the northern suburbs and

have witnessed a huge population growth for Epping, Doreen and Mernda which are currently serviced by CFA volunteers. I have served as the Officer in Charge at MFB stations including Somerton, Broadmeadows and Epping and Greensborough which respond with CFA volunteer stations. I can tell you first hand that there were so many occasions where the corresponding CFA Station failed to respond or on some occasions turned up well and truly too late. I appreciate the fact that we need volunteers in Victoria but realistically volunteers as I understand have no legal requirement to turn up, are not rostered on duty and certainly do not man the station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year. For whatever reason, be it family, work or other commitments, they simply cannot provide the level of protection our rapidly growing community rightfully deserves and pays for.

3. If all career firefighters are employed in one fire service, it will have no effect on volunteer turnouts or surge capacity.
4. The volunteers would not lose their support base. It will be maintained with operational firefighters. For example, Operations Officers and Operations Managers employed by Fire Rescue Victoria, could seamlessly continue their roles via an arrangement with CFA.
5. The reform areas are based around 35 integrated primary response areas which are now highly urbanised. it will have absolutely no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response.

In conclusion I respectfully ask you give consideration to support modernising fire service response along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees and volunteers. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. The ongoing industrial disputation has had a huge impact on the morale of all career firefighters. It is the best interests of *all* Victorians that this comes to a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible.

Kind Regards

Brad Arcus



Recruit Course Instructor: Course 2/2017

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