

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTER'S PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSTAION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

I write to you to express my strong support for the Firefighter's Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

My name is [REDACTED], and I am the wife of a professional fire fighter, [REDACTED], who currently works at Dandenong Fire Station. My husband has been a professional fire fighter for over 16 years and was previously a volunteer in a small town called Tallangatta. We reside in Mornington and we have two young children.

My husband always strives to be professional and always looks to improve on his skills and knowledge. He is a leader in a very important position as a Senior Station Officer that he has worked very hard over many years to attain. He manages and supervises at least 11 people every shift at the busiest CFA station in the State of Victoria. He has pride in his career and he has a love for it and his team members. I am dismayed though at the constant horror stories I hear in relation to how bad at times the CFA system is and how often the community and the career fire fighters are let down by this system, and it is apparent to me that this is getting worse and worse as time goes on.

I have heard many stories from [REDACTED] and his colleagues where they have responded to emergencies where back-up volunteer crews failed to respond to provide assistance, leaving the low crew numbers to fend for themselves in extremely dangerous situations. I have heard stories of volunteer brigades not responding to or taking too long to respond that has resulted in larger fires and greater damage. I hear stories of boundaries being set to deliberately keep career staff out of volunteer areas because of turf wars. I am relieved that my family and I reside in Mornington where we have the luxury of receiving an Emergency Medical Response from CFA career staff if needed. I would be horrified if we were living in a bordering suburb such as Mount Eliza, Mount Martha or Moorooduc where this emergency response is not provided because of the out-dated borders that exist.

I know my husband and his career co-workers are constantly frustrated by this flawed system. [REDACTED] assures me that the volunteers at his station do try their best but are limited by work and family life, and this causes severe problems with training and emergency response.

In addition to this, I would like to express my great disappointment and disgust at the treatment my husband has received during this dirty political campaign designed to denigrate professional fire fighters. For the first time in 16 years I have witnessed my husband question his dedication to CFA. I have watched his morale drop along with his enthusiasm for the job. I am appalled at so many who have taken it upon themselves to sit back and judge my husband and his friends just because they have chosen to become professional fire fighters, and just because they choose to be a part of a Union, whom in my opinion, provide more assistance and support to my husband than anyone from CFA or any Government ever has. These industrial wars caused by sheer jealousy and pathetic turf wars must stop. Why does this have to happen every few years? It consumes so much time, money and emotion. This is not in the best interest of anyone in our community.

I honestly fear for my husband's safety and I fear for his mental health. I demand that my husband gets the operational support that he deserves and I demand that the communities that have now

become so densely populated and are no longer actually country areas of Victoria to be given the service they deserve too. It is 2016 and our fire services need to be modernised. It is time for the broken systems to be fixed and I implore you to pass this very important Bill to remedy this disastrous situation we all find ourselves in.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]