

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Steve Peatling [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 3:55 PM
To: LCSC [REDACTED]
Subject: Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am writing to you to lodge a submission to the above inquiry. I request that my name and identity remain confidential.

My name is Steven Peatling and I currently hold the rank of Station Officer with the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Service Board. I have 27 years of service and hold qualifications in Emergency management, Hazardous Materials specialist, Emergency Medical response and other specialist appliance qualifications. I have been awarded a National emergency medal and the National Service Medal.

I live in Ocean Grove and work in Altona, MFB station number 46

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

1. Home owners and the community have a right to expect a professional emergency service in built up urbanised areas.

In recent years, the state government implemented reforms for collection of the fire service levy through rate notices. This reform ensures all home owners make a fair contribution to the provision of emergency fire services. With this significant financial contribution, it is fair that home owners in densely populated urban areas have a right to expect a professional and timely response to an emergency situation. It is an undisputed fact, that professional fire services provide a response from time of call to arrival on scene within 7.7 minutes. The same cannot be said for volunteer services and nor should they be expected to respond within these time frames.

2. Expanded urban landscape with complex emergency service requirements.

The urban landscape has changed, with densely populated areas having expanded past the original boundaries established by the MFB and CFA. There are now billions of dollars of assets and infrastructure in these areas. These highly urbanised areas are now facing complex emergency service requirements e.g. medical first response, car accidents, chemical spills, industrial accidents, residential and commercial complex fires.

The proposed reforms to create a single professional emergency service in these areas will provide the standardisation of career & specialist training, guaranteed response times, standardised response procedures and equipment. The proposed reform to have only career firefighters at the integrated stations in the outer suburban stations significantly improves emergency services to these communities.

While volunteer responders provide a necessary and crucial service, they do not necessarily have the appropriate training, experience or time to ensure the response times necessary to deal with the complexity of specific hazards that a densely populated urban area presents.

A professional response would include:-

- Guaranteed two trucks with at least 7 firefighters on scene within 7.7minutes.
- Standardisation career training, specialist response and response standards and equipment.

3. CFA remains unaffected and will benefit from the reforms

CFA volunteers are appropriate in low density rural communities. The proposed reform to employ career firefighters in one fire service servicing urban areas does not necessarily affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity. The proposed reforms ensures that volunteer support will be maintained with operational firefighters and the reforms propose to provide benefits to the volunteers through packages to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA, as well as funding for volunteer station upgrades.

Should you require further comment relating to the above, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Peatling

