

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
Email: LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

3rd July 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

My name is Vanessa Williams and I am a Level 1 Firefighter with a substantive position at Point Cook Fire Station. I have been an employee of the CFA for almost a year. My qualifications include EMR training, Level 2 First Aid, Wildfire Behaviour and Suppression, Hazardous Materials 1 plus all other necessary modules to competently complete the 19 week Recruit Course. I have also completed the increments to be able to drive code 1 in both the CFA Pumper and Tanker appliances.

I live in Geelong and travel to Point Cook for work. My volunteer experience includes the last 2 years coaching and managing junior Basketball and Football for the Moriac and Modewarre community. I have also volunteered my time in the past, for a year, as Vice President of the Moriac Pre-School Committee.

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

- I believe it is vital to have guaranteed backup when attending an incident within the community. Having 2 trucks with at least 7 firefighters being dispatched within 8 minutes ensures our promise to the community and mission to 'Protect Lives and Property'.
- Volunteers will continue to turn out to jobs when and where they are available. One fire service encompassing all career firefighters will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity. In the integrated stations primary response area the volunteers and career firefighters will continue to support each other both effectively and professionally to protect and provide the best community safety possible.
- There will also be no effect on other volunteer brigades in rural areas and bushfire response zones.

- Due to the large increase in population and urbanisation over the years, especially within the 35 integrated station primary response areas, it is necessary to have the best structure and system in place to provide outstanding emergency service to the community.
- One fire service will provide a consistent high standard of training for all career firefighters, with access for all to exceptional training facilities. With this one fire service will also come compatible equipment in all stations, to allow for effective and professional response.
- The dispute has caused much stress, discussion and uneasiness within my workplace. Fellow career firefighters are unsure of the future of their employer and are concerned with job stability. The dispute has also caused uneasiness when working with and training volunteer members at the station.
- The reform is a positive move in which also benefits volunteers as it includes funding for volunteer station upgrades and a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA.

As a new career firefighter I am already super proud of the job I perform in and for the community. I wear my uniform with pride, knowing what I have accomplished to get this far, and what skills I have gained to perform a critical job as an Emergency Service provider to the Community. I would love to be able to continue down this path and stand proud as member of a new and improved fire service.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Williams

██████████

██████████████████

██████████████