

Submission to Select Committee
Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire
Service Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
Callan Ritchie

Background

My name is Callan Ritchie. I have recently been employed as a career firefighter of CFA at Patterson River.

Experience

I commenced my recruit course on August 7 2016 and graduated as a level 1 firefighter in December. From this time I was appointed to Patterson River fire station.

Terms of reference

Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria

Using an example from my short time on shift, we were called out to a garage fire in a neighbouring suburb. The primary brigade was fully volunteer brigade. We turned out as a support brigade and arrived on scene almost immediately behind the tanker of the neighbouring brigade. My Leading Firefighter and I made entry to the house wearing breathing apparatus (BA). We found the fire in the garage attached to the house and managed to knock it down before it spread to the adjoining room. Whilst inside we heard a number of small explosions. The points I would like to make from this example revolve around safety and are as follows;

- The reason an appliance which met us on scene was a tanker was due to the fact that the responding personnel were not accredited to drive the best suited appliance (pumper).
- There was no crew wearing BA on the responding appliance from the fully volunteer brigade, meaning there was no back up crew to come in if we found ourselves in trouble. This ran through my head in particular when we heard the previous explosions.
- Fire service reform is necessary to provide protection for career firefighters and addresses the points above by dispatching in a timely manner a guaranteed appliance with all required skills and competencies.