

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Rodney Lawler I hold the rank of Acting Senior Station Officer with the MFB, I have 38 years' service and 36 of those years have been on the Fire Trucks turning out to emergency events in Melbourne and its surrounding areas. I am currently employed in the Fire Safety Directorate as a Fire Safety Inspector for the MFB.

I live in Templestowe and work at the MFB Burnley Complex, but for many years have been stationed at Northern District stations such as Thomastown, Heidelberg, Bundoora and Templestowe as an Operational Fire Fighter.

I also volunteer in my community with the Challenge Children's Cancer Support Network and have done for many years.

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

- Having a guaranteed 7 firefighters on the fire ground will ensure the safety of the fire fighters and will help protect life and property. This will ultimately mean better community safety and protection against fire and other emergencies.
- I have recently taken a desk job after 36 years on the trucks and in those 36 years there have been many times when I have feared for the health and welfare of the firefighters under my command due to the lack of resources being dispatched , or rather, not being dispatched by the CFA. During those times and being on the CFA boundary with only volunteers as a back up was always a worry to me and most certainly of strong concern was during the day when the manning on the CFA trucks was sometimes zero. This meant that 3 MFB firefighters were fighting a fire without back up, putting their lives at risk and potentially the lives of the public.
- These highly populated fringe and urban centres need a full time fire service and now is the time to make the changes while we have the opportunity. My career is coming to an end within the MFB and my son is hoping to follow in my footsteps but without these proposed changes I am reluctant to give him any encouragement because I would always be worried about his safety when he was turning out into these fringe areas and also worried about the future direction of the MFB without the ability to grow.

Yours sincerely,

Rodney William Lawler

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