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From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2017 1:05 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Dean Keeble
[REDACTED]

Leading Fire Fighter
MFB
[REDACTED]
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee Members,

I hope this submission finds you well.

I am a Fire Fighter, of 11 years, with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade currently stationed in Port Melbourne, Fire Station 39. I have attained the rank of Leading Fire Fighter which avail's me the opportunity to run the Station and Truck when the need arises. I am one of the few Fire Fighters who are part of the Marine Response program which sees me attending many number of incidents/emergencies in and around the surprisingly vast areas of Metropolitan Melbourne's waterways as well as regional and country areas of Victoria.

I am also an Emergency Medical Res-ponder who has, in conjunction with my crew mates and the dedicated staff of Ambulance Victoria, helped save the lives of a number of people who were in urgent need of medical attention.

My 11 years of Fire Fighting, has seen me stationed in and around the CBD of Melbourne as I live on the edge of the CBD, This has limited my exposure to both CFA Professional and Volunteer Fire Fighters in a Fire Fighting capacity. I do, however, have family that live in country areas of Victoria that are serviced by both Professional/Volunteer and by Volunteer only Fire Stations.

I am proud to say that I am a Fire Fighter, but in recent times, I am unsure how it will be received by people so I have sometimes told people that I am a public servant and have left it at that. The fact that I have been portrayed in certain areas of the media as a "Union Thug" hurts, but could not be any further from the truth. It has also effected my family by constantly having to try to defend our position with rational discussion and

facts not popular media hysteria.

My support for Fire Service reform is based on the fact that the growth of Melbourne and the larger regional areas of Victoria has not seen any change to, or how it is protected during day to day normal environmental conditions. As the urban areas have pushed out into what was once farming/bush land, the people who live in these areas are no longer able to effectively respond in a timely manner as volunteers, because they quiet simply don't have the time to be available all day, everyday. Because they are no longer working "on the land" and have full time jobs to try to make ends meet, especially when you consider the boom in house prices and the cost of modern living. No one is pointing any fingers saying they are doing a terrible job, (although there has been a lot of finger pointing in both directions) but this developing situation is because of the pressures of modern living. There have been times when volunteers have not been able to responded to fire calls in their area due to this.

I believe that the reform to the Fire Service will enable the urban edges of Melbourne and the larger regional ares of Victoria to be better serviced and protected. Not only are the service levels in the urban fringe going to be boosted, the safety and well being of my colleagues is going to be improved. For example, Currently, if a Professional crew is responded with a Volunteer crew, the level of training between crews can vastly differ. Volunteers may or may not be trained in the safe use of Breathing Apparatus, which limits the capabilities to perform rescues during an internal fire attack. This makes the job of Fire Fighting much more dangerous.

I do find it somewhat amusing, that the Volunteer Union (VFBV), have been complaining that the lack of consultation with their Volunteers regarding the reform is nowhere near what it should have been. Especially considering that the "consultation clause" in the proposed CFA EBA was one of the main sticking points some months ago, causing outrage and even Federal political intervention.

I could ramble on, as i am sure that a lot of people have, which is understandable, especially when you consider you are dealing with peoples livelihoods. I will finish up by asking you all, please consider the facts carefully, don't make decisions based on what is popular along party lines and for fear of being judged harshly by certain areas and members of the media. Sometimes the thought of change is a lot harder and scarier than change itself. Failure to change and move with modernity serves no one.

Kind Regards,

Dean Keeble

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File1:

File2:

File3: