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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 1:36 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 Samuel Webb
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I believe that I have had a really high level of exposure to the fire services within Victoria which has given me enough understanding and knowledge to provide my input into why a review / reform needs to occur within our state now.

I have been a member of CFA for approximately 20 years, firstly as a junior member, senior volunteer member and now for the last 10 years a professional career firefighter but I still remain a volunteer member of my home brigade in the country. Along with my service to the CFA I have had and still have a high level of commitment to this amazing organisation from other family members stretching over 50 years or more. Over my journey of a career firefighter with CFA, I have had a lot of positive interactions with the MFB and believe that I have great understanding of how their organisation works. Notably in the last 5 years I believe the roles of MFB and CFA career firefighters have come closer together to be the same through the interagency training, secondments, joint recruit courses, PPC/PPE, EMR accreditation and other specialist courses, along with working together daily to provide fire suppression to parts of Victoria. At this present time I can see very little difference between the two fire service's "Career Firefighter" roles which would make sense to align them on a permanent basis.

Another side of my exposure to fire services within Victoria, I have worked for Forest Fire Management Victoria (previously known as DSE) for 4 seasons, this experience of working for another Victorian Government Fire Service has given me a better insight into the differences between all organisations but I strongly believe that currently all fire services within Victoria are starting to work closer together. With this being said now would be an opportunity to review the fire services and see if there is a better way we can operate so there isn't doubling or tripling up the same role.

The other side of this review / reform is that Victoria is growing rapidly and population is increasing daily. I grew up in a country town where in the last 10 years the population has grown from approximately 10,000 people to 30,000 people. The CFA system with volunteers responding to calls is terrific, as I said I have had a lot of history within CFA and acknowledge the volunteers do an amazing job / role within their local communities.

However currently the growth of Victoria and risks associated with this growth is putting more pressure on some parts of Victoria to meet the requirements of emergency response.

Unlike 30 or 50 years ago many people now live with their families a lot further away from where they work, which makes it hard for members to maintain commitment to their local brigade and community through response to incidents as they are not available enough to assist due to work, family life commitments.

I support the volunteer model as I believe CFA volunteers do a fantastic job and are vitally needed to continue this role within their local communities around Victoria. However with the added pressures of daily work, family life balance it is getting harder to recruit and maintain members which is why a review /reform is a good thing now in 2017 to see if we can do it a better way for the community.

Having worked at various “integrated” CFA brigades and stations over a number of years, along with being a part of CFA for 20 years I strongly believe I have the experience, knowledge and understanding to identify a review or potential reform is the way forward for Victoria.

In the current climate there has been a lot of angst, disputes and relationships lost within Victorian Fire Services due to the EBA negotiations and I believe that some of our people have forgotten why they are joined the CFA or MFB, this is to provide emergency response to the people of Victoria.

With the fire services in Victoria being established more than 50 years ago, Victoria being one of the only states or territories still running this current model of fire services. A review/ reform is needed to ensure we are conducting our business efficiently and providing the people of Victoria the best and safest fire service possible, after all this is why firefighters and emergency service personnel do what they do, to assist the community.

I believe the issues with the Fire Services in Victoria need to be sorted out as soon as possible to begin rebuilding relationships that have soured, increase the public’s confidence in their fire services again but also provide a first class fire service that the Victorian people want, need and deserve.

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File1:

File2:

File3: