

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
To: [LCSC](#)
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
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Mr Peter Field
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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This is a private submission from the perspective of a Leading Firefighter with the MFB who works in a fully urban environment served by full-time firefighters and lives on a small acreage on the Mornington Peninsula served by fully volunteer firefighters in the three stations surrounding my home. I have spent a few months working at MFB stations that regularly turned out with the CFA, both full-time and volunteer.

What difference will the proposed legislative changes make to me?

I will be working for a new entity: Fire Rescue Victoria.

Fire Rescue Victoria will have a different senior management structure to the MFB.

Fire Rescue Victoria will employ hundreds more firefighters than the MFB and service more people than the MFB.

I will be covered by the Presumptive Legislation for a number of occupational cancer risks.

Eventually, my training and workplace procedures will allow working in what are now CFA integrated stations. That would mean that I might be able to work closer to home sometimes.

What will not change for me?

For at least some years, I will work in the same places, doing the same job that I have for 29 years.

My home will still be surrounded by volunteer stations.

What do I hope will change with the passing of the new legislation?

CFA firefighters will be properly funded. I am disgusted to see CFA firefighters having to shake cans, go door to door and hold fundraising events just to provide themselves protective clothing and equipment. They donate their time to do a dirty job; the least we can do is provide what they need.

Victorians who live in sufficient densities to justify full-time firefighters will get the coverage that they deserve. This will even improve the coverage on my acreage. If Tyabb

and Hastings eventually grow to justify full-time firefighters; that would take minutes off the time that it would take for me to be rescued from a house fire at home.

The new leadership of Fire Rescue Victoria might be able to make a fresh start on industrial relations. I have only been with the MFB for 29 years; in that time I do not recall an enterprise bargain that did not require some form of government intervention before it was agreed.

What are the risks?

CFA volunteers will leave in droves. Not likely. The reason that they volunteer will not change and the CFA will be able to concentrate on the Volunteers without the distraction of career firefighters.

Integration of the MFB and the CFA career firefighters and stations will take longer and be more expensive than planned. Possible; but the point is to create efficiencies, so the short term pain will set the State up for a better future in the long run.

CFA firefighters and Fire Rescue Victoria firefighters will not be able to work together. Every firefighter goes to a call for the same reason: to make it safe and go home safely. Firefighters are by nature robust and resilient. In the past, there has been some defence of "turf" where agencies have crossed boundaries to attend calls. That might persist. But it only occurs at calls where resources are more that adequate. When there is plenty of work to do, everybody takes all of the help they can get; so that we can make things safe and go home safely.

The risks are low, the benefits are real, a number of enquiries, with more brains and resources than I, have recommended that the State moves in this direction.

I respectfully request the committee recommends passing the Legislation as it stands.

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File1:

File2:

File3: