

By Email: LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I have been employed with the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade for 31 years, 24 years as a Station Officer.

I live in Lake Gardens Ballarat and work in Taylors Lakes.

I also volunteer my services in the community:

- Surf Life Saving Victoria Barwon Heads/13th beach 10 years
- Altona Hockey Club 10 years
- Ballarat North United Soccer Club game day Coordinator 15 years
- Total Girl Soccer Tournament Coordinator (1400 girls over a two day tournament) 9 years
- Ballarat and District Soccer Association Fixtures 2014-Ongoing
- Kyneton Car Club 2016-Ongoing

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

We have gone through three royal commissions into major fires in the last thirty two years. At each time it had been recommended that a centralised fire service be in control. After Black Saturday fires the appointment of a Fire Commissioner as the senior operational fire fighter in Victoria was recommended and adopted but the rest of the recommendations have not been implemented.

I believe that it is vital that we have guaranteed safety on the fire ground through adequate staffing (7 people, two trucks) correct radio processes and procedures and having effective management in control.

The majority of CFA Volunteers will not be impacted by the implementations of the recommendations as it will not affect their stations. Unfortunately the misinformation has been detrimental and has impacted on what was once a healthy relationship between Professional and Volunteer fire-fighters.

As a Station Officer in the Western zone I have witnessed the growth of Melbourne's corridors. I have worked with both Volunteers and new Professional CFA fire fighters.

Some examples from my experience which demonstrate the failures of the current structure:

- Turn out time
- Inadequate training of individuals and lack of identification
- Non response of Volunteers to call outs
- Non compatible equipment across boundaries eg. radio systems
- Actual response time in highly urbanised areas.
- No Emergency Medical Response

For the majority of my 31 years with MFB these issues have been ongoing. In this time Melbourne's population has doubled with no change to boundaries.

We now have an effective revenue stream to provide the people of Victoria with the fire service they demand.

There is a glaring difference between professional Fire fighters and Volunteers, volunteers want a fire and professionals don't.

Yours sincerely

Anthony William Sommers

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