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To: [LCSC; \"consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au\"](mailto:LCSC; \)
Subject: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
Date: Friday, 7 July 2017 4:42:45 PM

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

1. I am Station Officer Henri Laursen employed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board. I have been a career fire fighter for 14 years. I have specialist qualification in:
 - a. Long Duration Breathing Apparatus
 - b. Ship Board Firefighter
 - c. Urban Search and Rescue Cat 2
 - d. Trench Rescue
 - e. High Angle Rescue Technician
 - f. Heavy Rescue
 - g. Road Accident Rescue
 - h. HAZMAT Response Technician
 - i. Emergency Medical Response

2. I live in Williams Landing and currently posted to Spotswood Fire Station.

3. I also volunteer in my community with the Victoria Police and Education department Operation Newstart Youths At Risk program and have done so for 17 years.

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

Seven firefighters dispatched:

My Role and responsibility as a Station Officer at an emergency scene is to maintain the safety of the firefighting crews in my command. Direct firefighting crews to deliver a resolution to the emergency incident, rescue and or protect community members and their property from further harm, and render medical aid to those in need. By its very nature emergency response work and

firefighting is regarded as dangerous. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of firefighters a minimum of 7 firefighters and two trucks is required to be dispatched. Each of the seven crew members will fulfil a roll that supports and backs up other crew members providing a greater level of safety at the emergency incident. This is a function of the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS). After all no one should get hurt at work, everyone is to return home safely to their friends, family and loved ones.

Dispatched within 8 minutes:

Research studies into fire behaviour shows that a fire can be contained to the room of origin if the response time is kept to within 8 minutes. The same studies show that modern building techniques and materials combined with modern furnishings and occupation habits increase fire loads, this in turn contributes to increased fire intensities and rapid fire spread. A career firefighting force is expected to make entry to a burning premise a search for persons unaccounted for and engage in internal firefighting operations and tactics. This process is facilitated by the shorter response time that is expected of and mandated to career firefighters. Crew and community safety is not achievable if the response time is beyond 8 minutes. An 8 minute response time is critical to providing better community safety and protection.

Effect on volunteer turnout and surge capacity:

CFA volunteer firefighters have played an enormously important roll throughout the history of firefighting in Victoria and they shall continue to do so as an irreplaceable asset to Victorian communities. Fire Service reform and one career fire service is not designed to change the role volunteers have in their communities. However both local and state governments have a responsibility to provide a safe community through the provision of infrastructure, essential and non-essential services. This encompasses schools, hospitals, police stations, ambulance and fire services. Every single property with the state pays a levy for the provision of fire services. It is therefore not unreasonable for the community to expect an emergency response commensurate with the communities size, density and economic turnover. Volunteers will continue to perform their roll of providing for bushfire fighting and supporting other

volunteers through surge capacity. Furthermore the reform is designed to support volunteers with a package to assist volunteer recruitment and retention and funding for station upgrades.

Fire services to outer Melbourne urbanised zones:

In my area of Spotswood MFB crews attend to a diverse range of calls to domestic residential properties, light to heavy industry, essential services, transport infrastructure, chemical handling and manufacturing, schools and hospitals. Incidents range from emergency medical response, motor vehicle accidents, industrial accidents, spills, leaks and fires. Incidents within my area require a sophisticated technical coordinated response by highly trained and skilled emergency response firefighters. Melbourne's outer fringes have seen significant urbanization and development. Many of the hazards, risks and emergency incident types that Spotswood fire station would respond to can and do occur in areas deemed country Victoria. It is unrealistic, unfair and unsafe to expect volunteers to meet the demand of increased emergency calls within growing highly urbanised areas. Emergency calls that require a sophisticated technical and coordinated response. Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. They also contain light through to heavy industries and numerous essential services. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'. These areas are in need of a modernised fire service that is commensurate with the landscape usage. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

Yours sincerely,



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