

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

I write regarding the:  
**INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION  
 AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

1. My name is Nigel Richard Hill:

- • Station Officer District 14 Reliever. Caroline Springs F.S
- • Country Fire Authority
- • 13 years professional service

2. I live in Torquay and work currently at Hoppers Crossing F.S.

3. I also volunteered (7 years) in my community growing up in Paynesville, East Gippsland.

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

I began my career at Mildura Fire Station. As recently as 2005 it was common place to respond to going jobs with only 2 professional fire-fighters in the truck and no volunteer support. I began my career and quickly took a role as a 'transitional Leading Fire Fighter' this meant that although I was only qualified to a level 2 Fire Fighter rank I was expected to cover the duties of a Leading Fire Fighter; this thankfully over the last decade has begun to improve.

Now as a station Officer and Incident Controller, the numbers of professional fire fighters on the fire station and available to respond to calls greatly increases my ability to make and implement effective measures to combat incidents quickly and effectively.

It has been an ongoing misunderstanding that volunteer fire fighters can turn out and assist in the initial fire attack in support of staff fire fighters, when staff fire fighters respond in 90 seconds. The time between staff getting on scene and volunteers getting on scene requires incident controllers to have to modify their plan due to resources. The resources issue is then magnified when the volunteer trucks that respond do not have the appropriately qualified members on the truck. This puts increased pressure on the incident controller to further modify their plan and at times increases the time that the incident goes on.

I recently attended a primary call for Hoppers Crossing at ( [REDACTED] ,  
 Hoppers Crossing at approx. 1630hrs)

This was a fully involved shed which was quickly threatening nearby houses and the house at that address.

My initial request for 5 pumpers, came in the form of Tankers, Pumper Tankers FCV's and two other pumpers. This made coordination and ability to determine who was qualified and what sort of fire protection the area had whilst this call was happening hard to determine. Point Cook Pumper (staff) arrived and was the first BA crew (2 person) in to attempt secondary search of the house and internal fire attack. The initial search had been conducted by myself, the incident controller,

**and the hoppers crossing leading. The requirement for incident controller to conduct operations severely impedes safe control of an incident.**

**During the early stages of this incident I had to recruit members of the public to hold hose lines to assist in the protection of neighbouring houses, we also needed to get support from members of the public to help pull hose lines into place. This is something that during the incident that I got criticised, yelled at, by other members of public for getting these people to help. These people added to the pressure of keeping a close eye on them to ensure their safety along with my crew.**

**In highlighting the above reasons and examples why these proposed amendments should go ahead, it does in no way remove the requirement and ability of the volunteers to still play a vital role within the community in relation to fire protection, it simply removes the risk to the public and professional fire fighters in the early stages of going jobs and allows the incident controllers to make the appropriate plan best suited to the situation and with assurance that the appliances turning up in the first instance have the appropriately qualified members on the truck.**

**Yours Sincerely,**

**Nigel Hill  
Station Officer  
District Reliever**

- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment etc

Yours sincerely,

Full Name:

Contact details (postal address and/or mobile)