



Andrew Leorke [REDACTED]

06/07/2017 10:01 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission Firefighters Bill 2017
Leorke

Please find attached my submission for the Firefighters bill 2017

Regards,

Andrew Leorke

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delete it immediately from your system. Submission Firefighters Bill 2017 Leorke.docx

Andrew Leorke



Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am a Leading Firefighter with the Country Fire Authority stationed at Geelong City. I have been employed with CFA for seven years and volunteered prior to my employment for 16 years as a firefighter.

During my time as a firefighter I have had the opportunity to work at a variety of locations across the state and experience some of the disasters in this state, being campaign bush fires as well as the effects of the day to day incidents experienced within the community. I have a variety of skill sets that I have achieved over my time as a firefighter and these are but no limited to the following:

- Structural firefighter
- Wildfire firefighter
- Road Rescue operator
- Confined Space operator
- High angle rope rescue operator
- 42m Ladder Platform operator
- Emergency Medical Response (EMR) operator

I have also achieved the following with my time at CFA:

- National Emergency Medal (2009 Vic Fires) 2014
- National Medal 2014
- 20 year service medal 2014

I am writing my submission in support of this bill to reform the fire service for the following reason:

To provide service delivery to the community in their moment of need, firefighters when attending incidents need guaranteed backup, that can be achieved by initially dispatching 7 firefighters to the incident.

I have experienced the lack of support on varying occasions and would like you to support the need for reform by considering the example I have provided below:

On Thursday 25/05/2017 at 14:13hrs I was on station at Geelong City when the Brigade was paged to support Geelong West (Volunteer Brigade) to a structure fire in Geelong West. I was the Leading Firefighter on Geelong Rescue and as it was a support into a volunteer area Geelong City would send one of its two pumpers (used for structural firefighting) and Geelong Ladder Platform (for additional crew) which would make 5 firefighters dispatched to this incident.

The information received on dispatch to this call indicated 'smoke issuing and occupant unaccounted for'. Geelong Pumper 2 (GP2) and Ladder Platform (LP) arrived on scene within 4 minutes and noted the unit was well alight.

At 15:20 hrs the dispatch centre advised the Incident controller that Geelong West Pumper had failed to respond. The Incident controller requested further resources, one of those being Geelong Rescue which I then responded and arrived (within 4minutes) to assist the initial crew in search and rescue and fire suppression.

Thankfully no one was in the unit and crews were able to bring the situation under control in a short period of time.

The issue surrounding this particular job results in the uncertainty of the response from volunteer brigades in a community that is the largest regional city outside Metropolitan Melbourne. This statement is in no way a reflection on individual volunteers but rather highlighting the level of service delivery needed and the safe systems of work firefighters require when performing their role. Refer to the following link to understand the time constraints firefighter's are faced with when responding to a fire.

<https://youtu.be/u1WRTQaQnFs>

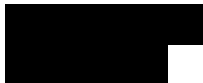
The failure in response from Geelong West Pumper had in my opinion compromised the following:

- Additional water source if one was unavailable (our pumpers carry 2000 litres of water, which in this situation could be emptied with one hose line flowing in just over 4 minutes.
This incident had two hoses and the complexity of a parked car in the street covering a fire hydrant where a police officer had to assist and break the window of the vehicle to move it so water could be fed to the pumper resulting in an uninterrupted supply of water to the fire.
This also slows the primary search of the premises as the internal crew could not advance without the supply from the mains. The second pumper may have provided an optional water source to the Incident Controller if it was deemed necessary.
- Additional BA wearers – the initial 5 responded all had been assigned roles at the incident
 - 1 x Incident Controller – Responsible for the overall control of the incident
 - 2 x BA wearers – used for search and rescue/fire suppression
 - 1x Pump operator – source/manage water supplies and pump operations
 - 1 x additional BA wear/ fire ground logistics
 - (This is where the additional crew if dispatched can make a difference)
 - 1 x BA operator (making a total of two teams/ safe systems of work. Two enter and two available to perform a rescue if something goes wrong)
 - Operations officer – this individual manages and controls the firefight which allows the Incident controller to manage the Incident only
- Specialists Rescue capability – Since the SES unit from Corio is unavailable to respond, having Geelong Rescue at this incident, limited the ability of this resource to respond to motor vehicle accidents or other rescue events. Corio SES have had no Road Rescue response capability for over twelve months due to change in working commitment of members and demand on the system. Again this is not a reflection on members of the SES but the effects of a changing society.

- Increased risk to other road users, with a greater number of fire units responding.
- Reduction in fire coverage to suburbs in the North of Geelong as Corio Fire Brigade had to be responded

In closing I would like to thank the committee for evaluating the proposed bill and hope that they look at the importance of what is required to provide a high level of emergency response to the community for who we serve.

Regards,

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