



Glenn Ryan [REDACTED]

06/07/2017 05:18 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire services review submission

To whom it may concern
Please find attached my submission for the fire services review committee.

Regards



Glenn Ryan Leading Firefighter (C Shift)
Wodonga Fire Station – 1 Smythe Street Wodonga 3690



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INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS.docx

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

My name is Glenn Ryan and I currently hold the rank of Leading Fire fighter and I am employed by CFA and currently stationed at the Wodonga Integrated Fire Brigade.

I started my fire fighting career as a volunteer with CFA in 2003 and became a staff member in early 2006 where I have spent many hours of training and completing the required courses to gain my Leading Fire fighter qualification which is an assessed rank. I'm also qualified in steep and confined spaced rescue and I hold a Certificate 4 qualification in Driver Training and in April 2017 I was part of a 3 man crew on Wodonga Pumper that received a Unit Citation for courage for a house fire that we attended and carried out a rescue with no other resources on scene with minimal water, but despite our best efforts the male that we dragged out of the building didn't make it.

I'm writing this submission in support of the fire services reform because of a few reasons.

- The establishment of an independent board to oversee response boundaries and review service delivery to the community which will take the emotion out of a decision to deploy career fire fighters to an area where needed and remove the turf war associated with such a decision which would enhance the response in these areas.
- To try to ensure a response of 7 career fire fighters to a fire, volunteers provide a fantastic service to the community but in my experience, they can't provide the guaranteed skills mix needed on the fire ground in the urban environment, an example of this is when Wodonga Pumper was responded to a fire at a factory at Wangaratta which is a 40 minute drive because of a failure to respond by the nearest pumper.
- To give an increased capacity to assist brigades in smaller towns that doesn't warrant the deployment of staff but are struggling to turn out an appliance. We have had a couple off nearby brigades recently come out and say publicly that they struggle to find crews during the week to respond and recently Wodonga Pumper had to travel 80km to assist in a structure fire only to be 10 minutes behind the first arriving appliance.
- In my time as a staff member and volunteer I can only recall 3 or 4 years where we haven't been in dispute and that is starting to take its toll on staff and volunteers, everyone is just had enough of the situation of fire fighters being pitted against fire fighters by outside influences and a minority within, the job is stressful enough without this going on in the background and the majority of operational members are in support of the changes.

In conclusion, the biggest priority is to get a fire appliance to assist the community when called upon ASAP no matter what sticker is on the appliance and the safety of all fire fighters. While surge capacity is needed, in my experience at structure fires you need fire fighters on the

ground quickly to conduct a rescue safely and efficiently. I've had the experience of losing someone while being under resourced on the fire ground and you have that question in the back of your mind if there were more fire fighters on scene or if I had have done something different, would the outcome been different. Despite what has been said in the media, volunteer brigades won't be affected and surge capacity will be maintained. The question I ask is could you see staff being posted into a town like Sea Lake or Walwa for example? I am sure the answer would be no, it wouldn't be feasible. My colleagues and I know what is needed to provide a service that the community expects. Pease give us the support so we can provide this service.

Regards

Glenn Ryan

Leading Fire Fighter

Wodonga Fire Station