



Chris Mitchem [REDACTED]

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc [REDACTED]
bcc [REDACTED]
Subject reform submission

Evening

Please find attached my submission for the inquiry into the Fire fighters presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017.

Regards

Chris MITCHEM Leading Firefighter

Mildura Fire Station 326 San Mateo Avenue, Mildura, Vic 3500
[REDACTED]

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Reform submission.docx

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Chris Mitchem and I am a Leading Fire-fighter in the Country Fire Authority, stationed in Mildura. I have worked at this location for the previous six years in an operational role.

To me, these reforms seem to be the most practical way in which this current dispute can be resolved. With all major parties involved in ain favour, it also seems to be the most sensible option.

I have been a part of the ongoing EBA negotiations and subsequent industrial actions which have resulted, along with my other work colleagues. During this time I have seen how this dispute has caused a rift between career staff and volunteers and the strain that it has taken on both sides.

I have absolutely no doubt that as it stands at the moment; the relationship between these two parties is as fractured as it has ever been. I believe it is at the point where neither party can work together nor the relationship is untenable.

This is extremely disappointing, not for me and my colleagues or for the volunteers, but for the community who we serve. How can we deliver the best possible fire service to the community when we are unable to put aside our differences and work together to deliver the best possible outcomes? For me the only option available is to embrace the reforms offered and then we can all move forward and get back to what we should be doing – providing a world best fire service to the people of Victoria.

We all know that Metropolitan Melbourne has grown and expanded significantly in recent times and our fire service must reflect that growth. Nobody could disagree that areas like Dandenong, Springvale, Frankston and the like would no longer be classed as being in the country area of Victoria. These suburbs have some of the most significant locations as well as densely populated areas in the state.

When major incidents occur in these areas it is vital that resources can be deployed as quickly and efficiently as possible and that when multiple appliances are involved, that they are all working under the same operational systems of work. Having mixed appliances from both CFA and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade on scene, where they work under different command structures, use different trucks, and even different communication systems seems bizarre.

If the proposed reforms do get passed and come into effect, there will be changes to both organisations which has some people, if not worried then at least wary of how it will affect them. From hearing the CFA's Chief Fire Officer Mr Warrington speak, I believe that he and the organisation which he represents, genuinely has the best interests of both parties at heart. His positive attitude to change and what these changes mean to both groups shows good strong leadership and confirms that he is the right person to be steering the ship during these turbulent times.

Instead of us worrying about what I might lose, I believe that we should be thinking about what we could potentially gain from this reform and use it as an opportunity to take the two organisations forward into the future and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Mitchem

Mildura Fire Station

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