



"MACKEY, Christopher"

06/07/2017 09:12 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission

1 attachment



Dear.docx

Please find attached my submission about Victoria Fire Services.

Chris Mackey



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Dear Inquiry Committee,

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

My name is Christopher Mackey and I am a professional firefighter with the Metropolitan fire brigade. I am writing to have my say regarding the legislation amendment to Victorian fire services.

I live in Moonee Ponds and work at FS43 – Deer Park. We respond primarily with MFB appliances from Sunshine, North Laverton and St Albans, but also with CFA appliances from Hoppers Crossing, Truganina and Caroline Springs.

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

Our city of Melbourne is growing, with outer Metropolitan growth rapidly expanding (1800 per week settling in Melbourne according to CENSUS 2016). However the borders that dictate what is considered country and what is considered metropolitan have not changed in almost 60 years. This must change with our growing city and should not be allowed to fall any further behind.

With the volume of fire calls increasing so is the need for a professional response. Many outer suburbs close to where I live such as Point Cook, Werribee, Hoppers Crossing, Truganina are labelled as country, and as a result don't receive the same amount of fire protection or emergency medical response as their inner city neighbours.

The reform of the fire services proposes to have a committee which will look at changing our current borders to better reflect our growing community.

People that live in aforementioned areas will be guaranteed 2 fire appliances with minimum 7 firefighters (2 teams of 2 wearing breathing apparatus, 2 pump operators and 1 incident controller) they will receive the fire coverage that they deserve, and the fire service they are paying for with the fire service levy.

The reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response.

The fire service reform will provide my colleagues and I with a safer work place, guaranteeing 7 firefighters on a fire ground which gives us the confidence to go into a burning building knowing we have back up on its way should something go wrong. It will also standardise equipment which will result in more flexible and better trained staff. Although I am trained and qualified to operate MFB fire trucks and equipment, I am not qualified to use CFA trucks. CFA and MFB even use different types of hose couplings, meaning that on the calls we go to together our equipment isn't interoperable.

There have been multiple times where I have been required to "step up" to a CFA station on my day off as the CFA were over capacity due to ongoing major emergencies and lack of professional staff, these "step ups" would be far more

efficient and cost effective if the MFB firefighters were trained and familiar with the use of CFA equipment, which would be the case after the reform.

During my whole career with the MFB we (the employees) have been dispute for our enterprise bargaining agreement, this ongoing dispute along with the constant barrage of negative press we receive from certain media outlets, members of parliament and volunteer associations has certainly taken its toll on me and my colleagues.

It's absurd that a small group of community protectors (less than 3000) have received more negative front page articles than the Iraq war, but it's true, 39 as I write this email.

As I intend to have a long career serving my community as a fire fighter my chances of developing cancer are far higher than that of the general population. The presumptive legislation recognises the challenges that firefighters have faced in accessing compensation for cancer arising from their service. The legislation will deliver equal access to compensation for career and volunteer firefighters.

The passing of this legislation would be a positive result for all Victorians. I firmly believe that this is a necessary step that needs to be taken in order to continue to provide a world class fire service.

Chris Mackey

