



"CBROOKING" [REDACTED]

06/07/2017 05:30 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Inquiry into the Firefighters'
Presumptive rights Submission

1 attachment



Inquiry Submission.docx

Attached is a copy of my submission.

Regards,

Clifton Brooking
Leading Firefighter

06/07/2017

To whom it may concern,

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTER'S PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT.

(REFORM) BILL 2017

- My name is Clifton Brooking; I have obtained the Rank of Leading Fire Firefighter and have been with the MFB for 35 years.
- I live in Darley and for the last 6 years have worked at the Laverton North Fire Station (FS49). This is situated on the current antiquated MFB/CFA border. We have many major hazard facilities in our area, primarily chemical manufacture and storage, but we also have factories and businesses, residential areas, schools, nursing homes and Port Phillip Prison.
- Also includes very busy freeways, highways street and road network.
- We respond primarily with MFB appliances from Spotswood, Altona, Laverton, Sunshine and Deer Park, but also with CFA appliances from Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Truganina, Caroline Springs and Werribee to name a few.
- I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

Today, Victoria's population is booming –the state is home to more than 6 million people. Melbourne has seen massive development over the past century. When Victoria's fire service boundaries were established in the 1890s our population was smaller and concentrated around Melbourne. It is now home to heavily urbanized growth corridors and sprawling suburbs- which continue to grow. I see this first hand at my work location where the urban sprawl into Hoppers Crossing, Truganina and Ravenhall continues daily at pace.

Victoria's antiquated fire service boundaries don't meet the needs of our state today in fact they put lives and property at risk.

Today there are 35 highly urbanized areas that are still wrongly zoned as 'country Victoria' under these antiquated fire boundaries- these areas require a rapid urban fire response.

As a resident of Darley one of the largest growing corridors of Victoria, I feel strongly we require immediate reform to modernise the fire services. Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and many others are still incorrectly zoned as country. I pay my fire service levy and believe that it should be spent on our fire services. The heavily urbanised areas of Victoria should have a modern fire service with an 8 minute response time and 7 professional firefighters on two fire pumpers- this is the minimum standard needed for emergency response to maximise the potential to save lives and minimise damage to property. Fire crews must respond in 8 minutes because after that, a fire reaches the flashover point- the point of no return where the property and people inside are at a very real risk.

This rapid response under 8 minutes is only guaranteed in Melbourne's metropolitan fire district. In this zone, specially trained professional career firefighters are in fire stations that have been strategically located to be able to respond within 8 minutes. Why don't I get this response just

because I live in Darley? The same can be asked by the people who live in, Ballarat, Melton, Point Cook, Rosebud, Cranbourne, Traralgon, Springvale and the list continues.

Being that I work in the Metropolitan Fire District, in my direct response area I will receive at least one other primary fire appliance to a Fire Call, that means as I approach a fire I can mentally size up and commit myself whole heartedly knowing that backup is right behind me in case its needed. As the bordering stands this currently isn't the case for Country areas, to which I also respond into.

Regardless of the amazing job the CFA volunteer brigades do, the fact remains that cannot be available 24/7 365 as they shouldn't ,they are community members with jobs and families. With our outer Metropolitan growth rapidly expanding by 1800 people per week settling in Melbourne according to CENSUS 2016, particularly in the West, the volume of calls is increasing as is the need for professional modern fire service who can respond to this growing demand.

I have personally been to calls in Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Rockbank and Truganina called on only after the volunteer backup has not responded with in 4 minutes. This alone puts the community at a huge risk as well as the firefighters attending the call as a lot can happen in 4 minutes. The number of calls I have attended over the years outside of our response area, and there has been no attendance by the CFA volunteers this is not a criticism of them but a failure of the current system

Bringing the 2 professional fire services under the one banner will eventually standardize everything with the exception of speciality equipment and can help to ensure a better level of training for all professional firefighters. The ongoing dispute where firefighters have been used as a political football has taken a huge toll mentally on myself and colleagues. We simply want to go to work and serve our community, this can be difficult with the constant barrage of hate from the media outlets, members of parliament and the volunteer associations.

The passing of this legislation would be a positive result for all Victorians.

Yours sincerely,

Clifton Brooking
Leading Firefighter

Contact details:

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