



"DENEHY, Craig"

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
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 Subject INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS'
 PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS
 COMPENSATION AND FIRE
 SERVICES LEGISLATION
 AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Craig Denehy. I have been a member of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade for over 13 years and hold the rank of Leading Fire Fighter. My current role is within Operational Training where I am a recruit instructor on the Victorian Recruit Firefighter Course.

I was raised in rural Victoria where my parents still reside in a small township diligently served by volunteer brigades. I am now raising my family in Caulfield, and my primary station of service has been Deer Park fire station where we daily work with career and volunteer firefighters from Caroline Springs CFA station and beyond.

My experience in the volunteer organisations that serve our state has centred around a 13 year association with Life Saving Victoria. I had the privilege of holding positions that included Patrol Captain, Chief Instructor, Gear Steward and Club Captain with Woodside Beach SLSC. It was both an extremely rewarding and taxing time of my life. I believe it was extremely positive in shaping both who I am, and the change of career that sees me as a professional fire fighter today. But it is also that consuming and exhausting experience that has shaped my view of so much of what I see playing out in many of the urban fringe fire brigades I encounter. What were once areas of low population density that were served by brigades who gave of their time freely are now highly dense suburbs with emergency call frequencies which are very difficult to service without dedicated 24hr coverage. I believe that the consistent increase in demand for response in these areas are too much for our community to ask of a portion of our community to carry in addition to their professional and personal responsibilities. I understand the taxing nature of this difficult work and cannot imagine that I could meet this demand on a volunteer basis without my family shouldering an unacceptable burden. Citizens who volunteer in these very densely populated communities should be in addition to a professional 24hr fire and rescue service. It was not until I completed my association with Life Saving that I began to understand the extent to which my private experiences took a back seat. I wish to emphasise that this is not a commitment I regret. It is one I hope that my daughters will in the future choose to experience in some sector of our community. But it has led me to realise that where appropriate all residents of Victoria should contribute to professional services in areas of dense

population (or high demand for response) so that individuals and families aren't unduly burdened.

In conclusion I respectfully ask you give consideration to support modernising fire service response along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees and volunteers. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. The ongoing industrial disputation has had a huge impact on the morale of all career firefighters and their families. It is the best interests of all Victorians that this comes to a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible.

Kind regards

Leading Firefighter Craig Denehy
Recruit Instructor | Operational Training
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre
284 – 290 Hume Highway, Craigieburn, VIC, 3064.

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