



Shayne Egan [REDACTED]

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform submission

1 attachment



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To whom it may concern,
Please find attached my submission for the Fire Services Reform Select Committee .
Regards,
Shayne Egan

LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au

Assistant Clerk Committees

Department of the Legislative Council

Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Parliament House, Spring Street

EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS

COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT

(REFORM) BILL 2017

My name is Shayne Egan and I am a Leading Firefighter with the Country Fire Authority, stationed at Hallam Fire Station in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. I have been a career firefighter for 10 years and in that time have worked at Boronia, Dandenong and Springvale Fire Brigades. As well as performing the general duties of a firefighter, I am an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR – since the trial began for CFA career firefighters) Level 1 Incident Controller, a qualified Driver/Operator/Crew Leader of the 37m and 42m Ladder Platform, Teleboom, Aerial Pumper, Heavy Rescue, Protective Equipment Van and Chemical, Radiological and Biological Detector Operator. I also have qualifications in Steep Angle Rope Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue Category 1.

As well as this, I am the only CFA career Firefighter to instruct on both a CFA Recruit Course and an MFB Recruit Course, those being CFA Recruit Course 4/2016 and MFB Recruit Course 121 (2017).

I have been awarded a 20 Year Service Medal (including volunteer service) and the National Medal.

I live in Montmorency and as stated, I work at Hallam Fire Station.

I was also volunteer for 11 years at Eltham Fire Station, serving the communities of Eltham and surrounding suburbs. I held the position of 4th Lieutenant for four years.

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

I am stationed at a busy brigade. We are fortunate to be surrounded by other integrated (both career and volunteer firefighters) brigades which means we are guaranteed a minimum 7 firefighter response so our firefighting operations can be as safe as possible. Unfortunately,

this is not the case in other areas of the state. This is not the fault of our volunteer firefighters. They do a fantastic job but like all of us have their own careers, families, social commitments etc. to attend to.

I personally feel much safer when we have a full crew on scene knowing that if the worst happens, there will be someone there to help me. My wife and two young boys are fully aware that I work in a dangerous profession, and I know they would feel much better knowing the support was there for me if required.

For this reason and for the safety and wellbeing of the community we serve, I support the reforms that would mean a guarantee that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes. The community stands to benefit from well funded career and volunteer fire services working with each other to achieve this and most importantly for the safety of the community.

There has been a lot of talk about Victoria losing its surge capacity of volunteers. This will not happen. When the reforms are introduced, volunteer brigades will gain more independence, access to training they currently don't have and have a new training ground to gain even more skills at. It is disingenuous to say that "volunteers will leave in droves" as this is a huge insult to the commitment and dedication volunteers have to their community. As happens now, career firefighters will be there to support our volunteer brothers and sisters in any way we can. During the summer bushfire period, when surge capacity is mostly utilized, volunteers will respond as they have always done, as highly trained firefighters to deal with the threat of bushfire.

The current 35 areas where CFA have career firefighters are now highly urbanised and would benefit from a proper fire service response. No longer are these areas small country towns.

As I mentioned, I have instructed on both CFA and MFB Recruit Courses and had input into the new Victorian Recruit Firefighter Program. As of now, all career firefighters will be formally trained to the same standard (I can categorically say that there was little difference between CFA and MFB Recruit programs) on the same subjects and at the same Training Facility. This will further serve to benefit the Victorian community.

Other benefits of the Fire Services reform include standardized equipment, which is currently being worked on anyway and greater use of specific skill sets, for example I will be able to go into current MFB stations and crew their Ladder Platforms, Telebooms and Heavy Rescues. This is a huge benefit to the Victorian community as skills can be utilized where they previously couldn't.

It is no secret that the past few years have seen some dark times for Victoria's Fire Services. Moral is at its lowest I've seen and has had a big impact on me personally. The proposed reform will mean that career firefighters can utilize their skills all over the state and volunteers can carry out their service to the community independently in a fully volunteer Fire Service.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades as well as providing volunteers with a pathway into the career ranks if they so choose.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Shayne Egan

