



Gerard Curtis [REDACTED]
07/07/2017 12:52 PM

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

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

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Gerard Curtis and I am a CFA Career fire fighter, stationed at Mornington Fire Station. My rank is Fire fighter, with almost 1 year of experience.

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

- Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this out-dated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia, Geelong and Mornington are just some of the 35 'country areas'. I live in Noble Park, which is also heavily urbanised but is still classified as a 'country' area. As a member of the community, if my house or a neighbour's house was on fire, I want the guarantee that enough qualified fire fighters will attend to protect myself, my girlfriend, my dog and my house (especially as I know that there is the capability for that to occur with Springvale and Dandenong being within reasonable distance). I'm not saying that I would rather a Career staff station to attend rather than my local brigade (Noble Park), but there is no absolute guarantee that the volunteers will respond, or that they will have the required qualifications to perform the required job (ie. breathing apparatus qualifications). This is why a rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional fire fighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in these highly urbanised areas.
- In my area of Mornington it has been frustrating on numerous occasions where there have been jobs in neighbouring brigades' areas and we haven't been able to attend and help the community. One particular example occurred on the 20th May, where there was a job in Mt Martha (approximately 7km away) and we were not immediately paged to the job. Once approximately 5 minutes had passed, we were finally paged to the job after Mt Martha had failed to respond. There have also been occasions where volunteers at Mornington haven't turned out to jobs that we have been dispatched to. This is at no fault of their own as it is very difficult as a volunteer to turn out all the time due to family and work commitments, but it isn't safe for me or the community if we are turning out to jobs with a risk that there will be no support from at least one other truck. This needs to change and supporting the proposed reform will help fix the problem.

- With the proposed reforms will lead to the implementation of all career fire fighting pumpers being fitted with road accident rescue equipment. This will allow career fire fighters to commence rescue activities whilst awaiting the responded Heavy Rescue vehicle (up to 25 minute response). This will again help improve our ability to protect life and help the community.

From these reasons it is my strong opinion that we must move into a modern fire service, where changes can be implemented and decisions made for the sole purpose of improving community safety. These are changes are currently unable to be made due to the current out-dated organisational framework.

Yours sincerely,

FF Gerard Curtis



Gerard Curtis Firefighter

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