



Jonathan Horne [REDACTED]
06/07/2017 11:06 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject submission for the fire services reform

Assistant Clerk Committees,

Please find attached a submission for the **INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

Sincerely,
Jonathan Horne

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fire services reform submission.docx

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

My name is Jonathan Horne, I am a firefighter at the Ocean Grove fire station and have been employed by the CFA in that role for the past 3 years. I currently live in Drysdale/Clifton springs area on the Bellarine peninsular and also work on the Bellarine at the Ocean Grove firestation.

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

- For better community safety and protection;
 - As a member of the community in which I serve, I would expect a quick and capable response from my local fire service should they be needed. As it stands now, I cant promise my wife and family that we or our community would receive that service. I believe that a reform would change this dramatically, guaranteeing that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes. On numerous occasions I have responded to fire calls in our area and commencing the firefight expecting a volunteer crew to turn out to back us up and to provide safety to our crew and extinguish the threat as quickly as possible to no effect.
- Employing all career firefighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity
- Volunteer support will still be maintained with operational firefighters. OO's, OMs etc. being employed by FRV but continuing their roles through an arrangement with CFA.
- The reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response.
- The 35 CFA staffed areas are now highly urbanised and the fire service needs to be able to keep up with the growth and increased population. In 1956, Geelong's population was 88 thousand. Today's population of Geelong has reached 240 thousand and it is predicted to reach over 320 thousand within the next 15 years. We need to be PRO-active, not RE-active.
- The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment etc.
- To have all career staff being employed by one fire service makes so much sense. The fact that most Victorians didn't even know that the CFA had full time firefighters at 35 integrated fire stations across Victoria until recently and thought that the dispute was between the MFB and the CFA just shows how out dated our service is. To have all the career staff under one banner would simplify the dealings with the government and our EA's, the training, and the funding.

- 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 etc.

The Bellarine Volunteers have requested that a second pumper from Geelong City or Belmont be dispatched to all daytime calls, with it looking to go 24 hours within the Bellarine area as this will guarantee 7 qualified firefighters to attend incidents due to many brigades failing to respond or not having sufficient crews and skills mix to carry out safe firefighting activities. This is a welcome change as more and more volunteers are not working locally and are unable to turn out.

Staff and volunteers will still provide a professional firefighting service to Victoria under a new banner. This will allow the career firefighter to come into line and standardise equipment and specialist response, training and career progression within the new service whilst working with the CFA's Volunteer firefighters.

In all, it will be a beneficial outcome for the state of Victoria. If it were the Ambulance or the Police that was enhancing its service delivery, would it receive such a negative response from such small factions? I don't think so! So why oppose such a reform of the fire service? It should be welcomed considering only good things can come about from it such as a safer community. The reform should be welcomed and supported. If we leave it too late, it could possibly cost lives.

There has been so much negative talk and propaganda about the fire service reform, but this seems to be only for political gain. I hope that you can see the benefits for our communities and increased safety for our firefighters and make the right decision based on the facts and whats best for the community and the stave of Victoria.

Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Horne

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