



Leon Beattie [REDACTED]

06/07/2017 03:22 PM

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

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees.

Inquiry into the firefighter's presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017.

My name is Leon Beattie and I am a level 2 firefighter employed by the Country Fire Authority. I write to express my **support** for the proposed fire services reform.

I currently live in Greensborough, which is in MFB territory. I am comforted knowing that if my house was on fire I have a 100% guarantee that a minimum of 7 highly trained professional firefighters will be on scene within 8 minutes.

As it has been publicised, Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and densely populated. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia, Geelong and my the station I work at South Morang are just some of the 35 'country areas' and are not getting the protection they deserve.

These areas need to be modernised reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

Working in South Morang we do not have the same guaranteed truck response. We may turn out to an emergency under the current fire service model and have no supporting appliances on route. This has happened a numerous times in our area. We have been to house fires where we are supported by local brigades and have the local brigade arrive in wildfire turnout gear. This means that our crew of 4 are left to do all the internal work. This not only puts me in harms way but also all the crew I work with. Having a guaranteed 2 trucks with 7 firefighters on route to all calls, will mean better safety and protection to the community and other firefighters, if a brigade fails to turn out there will already be 2 trucks on their way in support. This new reform will also guarantee support for the local volunteer brigades as they will know that there is other appliance on their way to assist them. If the career trucks are not needed they can always be cancelled and returned

We have sat in the station and seen calls go out to local brigades which are only a few minutes away and we have not been paged. Today for example there was an MVA with possible persons trapped in a local brigade area. Had we been paged to this job we would have been on the road with in 90 sec. It could only benefit the community if we are paged to these jobs.

I understand that volunteers give up their own time to support their community. They have jobs, families and are not always available. But the community deserve to know that they have guaranteed firefighters on their way when they are in need of help.

It would be better to have all career staff employed by one fire service as it will standardise career training, specialist response, response standards and equipment.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA, including funding for volunteer station upgrades. The damage this dispute has had in the workplace is immense. It has created strain not only on me, my colleges but also on my family as well. Being only new into the career I have found since entering that I am always defending my role as a firefighter. My family have to do the same as well. The proposed fire service reform will at last provide clarity and continuity to the roles of both career and volunteer firefighter.

All Victorians, professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a firefighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

Yours sincerely,

Leon Beattie

