



"BARRIE, Martin" [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Service Reform

Dear Assistant clerk committees,

Inquiry into the firefighters presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

I am Leading Fire Fighter Martin Barrie, registration # 10318, from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne.

I have been employed as a career firefighter for the past 12 years

I am currently stationed at Carlton Fire station (03) as a firefighter, emergency medical responder and heavy rescue technician.

I live within the metropolitan Fire District.

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

1. Presumptive Legislation

Virtually every fire I attend, despite my best intentions and adherence to safety procedures, I can *taste* that I am being exposed to innumerable toxins. This is unavoidable. Whether or not this will result in me being diagnosed with cancer in the future is uncertain. What is certain is that should I die as a result of cancer, my family should not have to shoulder the burden of proof that it is related to my firefighting given all the existing evidence.

2. Medical First Responder

For 25 years the Metropolitan Fire Brigade has provided a medical first responder service to assist Ambulance Victoria in all medical calls registering no pulse, no breathing. A casualty's likelihood of surviving such an event depends on earliest possible intervention. Due to our 90 seconds out the door, and on scene time of less than 8 minutes, permanent fire brigade staff play a vital role in administering lifesaving medical treatment prior to Ambulance Victoria's arrival. In our rapidly growing community this is a critical service that needs to be extended to as many people as possible. This is not possible from a volunteer service, although there has been suggestion of trials, volunteer brigades simply cannot guarantee a minimum 3 crew, medically trained, response within an effective time frame.

The Fire Service Reform would extend the coverage of this life saving service to another 35 communities.

3. 7 on the fireground

There has been a lot of misinformation around the seven on the fire ground.

In short this is basic occupational health and safety. The fire ground is a dynamic work place. As with all professions we have an obligation to minimise risks to personnel whilst at work.

Seven on the fire ground does not mean we don't start work until we have 7 firefighters, as has

been misleadingly reported. On the contrary, we use our faster response time to get to work earlier with the knowledge that if a misfortune occurs there is guaranteed back up support already responding; critical in an event like entering a burning house to try and locate an occupant unaccounted for.

Knowing there will be 7 on the fire ground is essential to enabling first on scene to begin effective operations.

4. Guaranteed 8 minute response

Nobody under values the work of volunteer brigades, they are a vital link in the emergency management of Victoria, and will continue to be. The reality is volunteers can't be expected to stop what they're doing, either at home or place of employment, get to they're local station, get prepped to respond and turn out, once they have filled an appliance with staff, in the same time a career station can respond; 8 MINUTES.

The Metropolitan boundaries are currently locked and unable to expand whilst growing communities, like Hoppers Crossing, with dense populations are still considered "country".

The reform is critical to providing adequate and timely response to our ever expanding population which not only increases numbers but introduces more specific hazards like shopping complexes and high rise living.

The cascading response method currently used by CFA is inadequate to cope with the changing demands of population growth.

Yours sincerely,

Leading Fire Fighter Martin Barrie
10318
Carlton Fire Station

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