



Morgan Mitchell [REDACTED]
07/07/2017 12:07 AM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject FIRE SERVICES REFORM SELECT
COMMITTEE SUBMISSION

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees
Please find attached my submission for the fire services reform select committee.

Regards

Morgan Mitchell



Morgan Mitchell Leading Firefighter B Shift
Ballarat City Fire Station, 1120 Sturt St Ballarat 3350
[REDACTED]

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Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Morgan Mitchell; I am a Leading Firefighter with the CFA stationed at Ballarat City Fire Station. I have been a career firefighter since the start of 2011. In that time I have been stationed at Shepparton and Ballarat City. I hold all standard qualifications for my rank and additional specialist qualifications on the Heavy Hazmat appliance, 37m Ladder Platform, Aerial Pumper, and Protective Equipment Support Appliance. I am also qualified in Emergency Medical Response, and as a Mapping Officer where I work in an incident management team working closely with all our supporting agencies as well as volunteer members.

I am a recipient of the National Emergency Medal for my time spent deployed to the Black Saturday Fires, I also have a 10-year service medal with the CFA. Outside of the CFA, I achieved my Queen's Scout award through Scouts Australia, and I continue to volunteer with Scouts as a water activities instructor.

Before becoming a career firefighter, I was the 3rd lieutenant in the Maryborough Fire Brigade. I joined the Maryborough Fire Brigade as a 17-year-old and volunteered heavily for six years before becoming a career firefighter and moving for work.

I live in Creswick just to the north of Ballarat, a small township of around 2,500 people.

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

Ballarat is just one of many locations growing at a fast rate. Lucas is a new suburb on the western side of Ballarat. The people living in Lucas would expect the same level of fire cover as someone living in Alfredton the adjoining suburb to the east. Currently, the main shopping centre in Lucas is in the Cardigan Fire Brigades response area; Cardigan is a small rural station with a Tanker as their main fire appliance. Their station is 8.3kms from the shopping centre they have a standard response time of 10 minutes to turn out and 20 mins to be on scene. Due to many of their members working in Ballarat, they can struggle to respond with a full crew of appropriately trained firefighters. Even if they can respond with crew required for the job they still lack the correct firefighting appliance for the risk that they are responding to. The Ballarat City Fire Station, on the other hand, is just 5.9kms to the east. Ballarat City has a standard response time of 90 seconds and an on-scene time of 8 minutes, with a full crew fully trained and equipped to fight a major structure fire. Ballarat City is the third brigade to be called to a fire at the Lucas shopping centre.

I struggled to explain to friends that they receive a different standard of fire cover because they live on the wrong side of the road and are covered by a brigade that is further away, less equipped and slower to respond.

The reform will benefit the suburb of Lucas in many ways. By having an independent Fire District Review Panel that would review the boundaries between the fire services, based on: population growth, urban development and the volume of Triple 000 calls. This would look at flaws in the current system and address the shortfalls that I mentioned before.

The extra funding promised to the CFA would help replace or supplement the current tanker at Cardigan with a pumper (a truck built for urban structural firefighting). Extra funds, for training of the volunteers, to enhance their skill in structural firefighting giving them a safer working environment.

The growing community of Lucas will benefit from a guaranteed response of 7 career firefighters in two heavy pumpers.

I have attended fire calls in the Lucas area where we were the only fire appliance on scene, with one volunteer firefighter turn up in their own private vehicle. This put the community and firefighters at risk as there is an insufficient number of firefighters to safely carry out the job.

My example is of Lucas is not an isolated example. Daily we support brigades that by no fault of themselves, fail to respond to fire calls, sometimes not at all, and the majority of time after their allotted response time with insufficient and not appropriately trained crew.

These changes will increase the protection to my family in Creswick by providing more funding for training and appliances to the local volunteers at the Creswick Fire Brigade. The support they receive from the career firefighters at Ballarat City will be enhanced, but due to the travel time involved to get to Creswick from Ballarat, my family will still rely on the Creswick volunteers in an emergency.

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 and extra training.

This is why the reform will benefit all of Victoria those serviced by career or volunteer firefighter.

Yours sincerely,

Morgan Mitchell

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