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07/07/2017 02:25 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
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Subject FF Dowell submission

1 attachment



Dowell submission.docx

Thankyou,
Paul

Email sent using Optus Webmail

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Paul Dowell. I am a firefighter with the MFB and have been a full-time firefighter for 3 years. I am currently stationed at Eastern Hill on D Platoon and have worked at this station for short period. Prior to this, I have largely worked at the Eastern stations of Croydon and Box Hill.

I am in full support of the proposed fire services reforms.

At present, I live outer Melbourne (Selby). Whilst I live in semi-rural, CFA volunteer serviced area and respect the fantastic work they do, I find it unbelievable that despite all this growth within Melbourne urban areas, the fire service boundaries have not significantly changed in decades. That means that those people living in urbanised areas in high growth outer suburbs and regional cities don't get the same coverage that is provided in the inner to middle Melbourne suburbs. I believe that the communities in areas such as Frankston and Geelong deserve (and pay for) a full-time fire service, with two appliances with a minimum seven firefighters responding within 8 minutes. I have seen first-hand the enormous difference a few minutes can have in emergency situations such as the development of a structural fire or the progression of a cardiac arrest.

During time stationed at Croydon with the MFB, I was involved in firefighting operations with integrated CFA stations such as Boronia and Warrandyte Sth. These are examples of fire stations that have moved from rural volunteer operations to integrated urban fire brigades due to population growth over the past few decades. These areas must have better responses and with the proposed fire service reforms they will come into line with the current MFB response. Professionally, if I was a firefighter in a current CFA integrated station, I would want to know that I had a fully trained crew on a second appliance arriving within minutes of my appliance for any fire, rescue or incident. At present, there is no such guarantee.

CFA volunteers play a very important part in our rural firefighting capacity. Each time I am turned out as part of a strike team to rural areas for major bushfires I am willing and happy to support them and work with them. These reforms have no impact on the volunteer service (in fact they include features to assist with recruitment, retention and funding) and all to do with better protecting Victoria.

Finally, I want to convey to the Committee the emotional toll this ongoing dispute has had on both my colleagues and me. What began as an EBA negotiation has turned into a public, politically-driven agenda with little regard for the major issue at hand – public safety. When making your recommendations and vote, please make this your deciding factor.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Dowell