

Submission to the Fire Services Bill Select Committee 2017

of Royston James Gordon Hillier

I commenced work as a Firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in 1990 and was promoted to my current rank of Leading Firefighter in 2001. I have been stationed at Keilor Fire station since 2000. I am currently off work with PTSD, unfortunately a common side effect of firefighting. I have also been a Country Fire Authority volunteer with Spring Hill Fire Brigade since 1994.

As a CFA volunteer the reforms will have no impact on my brigades ability to perform their duties. In fact the Presumptive Legislation will be beneficial, although I do believe that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder should be included as studies have shown rates amongst firefighters equivalent to combat veterans.

At Keilor Fire Station we have two appliances, resulting in regular move-ups to other Fire Stations to maintain response coverage. As a Leading Firefighter I may be the OIC of the appliance. When this occurs to stations bordering the CFA boundary there is always a concern that if you get a call, will the CFA respond in a satisfactory timeframe and will they have sufficient trained crew. This uncertainty means a more defensive firefighting approach must be adopted, for firefighter safety, thus resulting in greater property loss and a greater risk to public safety. The reforms will not remove these problems, however they will be moved to less populated areas thus reducing the risk to the public.

The reforms will also produce a cohesive and standardised firefighting response to a greater proportion of the Victorian population.

The reforms will also streamline the current industrial system as there will be only one EBA, not two. The current situation of firefighters being used as "political footballs" and publicly vilified, has undermined over a centuries worth of public good faith in their Fire Service. The result of this has been extremely stressful. A speedy passage of this important legislation will allow resolution to the current EBA process and a return to a less stressful and proactive environment.

Respectfully

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