

**Prue Purdey**

---

**From:** David Booth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 June 2017 10:27 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire Services Reform Bill

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Committee Members,

My name is David Booth, I have been a Professional Fire Fighter with the MFB for 32 years and am currently a Leading Firefighter, stationed at Oakleigh. I am qualified to operate various appliances, including the Road Rescue unit.

I am writing to you to share my experiences and to explain why I think the Fire Services Reform Bill should be passed.

I believe the passing of this Bill will provide better protection for the population of the State and offer increased support for all Firefighters, both Volunteer and Professional.

At Oakleigh we are often required to move up to Dandenong CFA station to cover their area when they are busy elsewhere. When we are responding to calls in their area it is common for the Volunteers from the neighbouring Volunteer Station to be unable to attend. This leaves us with only one truck attending, therefore, four firefighters on the ground within eight minutes, not the required seven. Seven on the fire ground in the eight minute time frame means that the safety of my colleagues and I is not compromised, and ensures that we are efficient in performing our job (saving life and property). When the Volunteers do attend, they are not always qualified for structural firefighting breathing apparatus, which means that they cannot enter a burning building to back us up. This scenario is common place where the CFA area meets the MFB area. I continually hear from both CFA and MFB firefighters of this happening on a regular basis.

This is not a criticism of volunteers, it's just the way the system works at present. Its shortcomings are caused by population growth, changing workplaces and increased urbanisation.

When our present fire coverage system was implemented, areas like Frankston, Dandenong and Hoppers Crossing were country areas; but now they are part of the Greater Melbourne area and their populations have far exceeded the capacity of the present fire coverage system.

Many people work much further from home than they used to which means a Volunteer Firefighter who lives in Hallam may now travel to Clayton for work and, therefore, it is impractical for a volunteer to attend a Firecall during work hours. Furthermore, even if a Volunteer Firefighter does work locally, it is unlikely that a business today can afford to have one or several of their employees leave work to attend a Firecall.

These shortcomings will be drastically reduced with the passing of this Bill. We are the only State remaining with this antiquated and inadequate system.

The ongoing industrial dispute has caused much stress and anxiety amongst our workforce, both CFA and MFB. It has also created an atmosphere of division between Volunteers, Professionals and the two services. There has been an extraordinary amount of negative feeling created in the community by the Media, further adding to the stress of the situation. I am confident that all Firefighters are keen to see an end to the turmoil and resume a professional, friendly working environment.

This is not a "them and us" argument; both Professional and Volunteers are required to protect our State and I do honestly believe both services and the population will be better served by the passing of this Bill.

I implore you to do everything within your power to insure this Bill passes. I welcome any further discussion and can be contacted on the number below.

Yours Sincerely,

David Booth  
[REDACTED]