

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

My name is Joel Davey and I am a Senior Station Officer for the Country Fire Authority (CFA). I have been employed by the CFA for approximately 15 years, but have been involved with CFA since I was 12 years old as a Volunteer. I have served actively as a Volunteer and have held positions up to the rank of Operations Manager.

My experience as a Volunteer and also an employee of the CFA place me in a position where by I am able to appreciate the benefits that this Bill affords volunteer and career fire-fighters, and the greater Victorian community.

I currently live in Red Cliffs where the fire coverage is provided by volunteers' and is supported by the career staff from the Mildura Fire Station.

**I support the proposed reform of the fire services and provide you with this submission detailing the reasons why.**

- There will be no effect on volunteer brigades or surge capacity as a result of this reform. The reforms revolve around the 35 currently integrated station response areas and do not encroach on other brigades. Volunteers at the currently integrated stations will still be able to volunteer and consultation has taken place with those volunteers. Current response arrangements in Mildura can see a primary appliance from Mildura respond regularly 20 kilometres outside of Mildura to support surrounding volunteer brigades. This initiative was designed to relieve the pressure on volunteers who were struggling to respond. On regular occurrences the Mildura appliance will have driven through the adjoining brigades (Irymple) response area prior to them responding. There are two key elements to this, 1). Regardless of career fire-fighters arriving first to Irymple fires or driving through their response area prior to them responding they still attract good numbers of volunteers and currently have 31 registered members. 2). With these response arrangements the community are guaranteed a first class and timely fire service response.  
***The fire service reform does not change any of these arrangements so volunteers within these brigades will continue to be supported and the community will continue to receive a world class fire service, with no reduction in fire-fighting capacity.***
- To suggest that having all career fire-fighters in one fire service will effect volunteers ability to turnout or provide surge capacity is incorrect. The fire services reform is designed to bring the fire-fighting services in Victoria out of the dark ages and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The CFA Chief Officer has visited integrated brigades around the state and I was lucky enough to attend one of his sessions with the volunteers from Mildura and surrounding brigades. He emphasised that there would be no effect on volunteers. Volunteers will still have a role as they always have and will still respond to fires and go on strike teams providing that surge capacity. Interestingly the Irymple Fire Brigade who were very vocal locally about the "hands off the CFA" campaign had there Captain make

comment at the forum and openly said something along the lines of, “there will really be no effect on the volunteers, it is the staff that the reforms will effect”.

***A volunteer, a CFA Captain, a local leader who was vocal in the “Hands off the CFA” campaign admits that there will really be no effect on CFA volunteers.***

This fire service reform will allow the CFA with its volunteers to modernise itself into a truly volunteer organisation whose foundations are built on volunteerism. They will be able to fully modernise with the assistance of a \$100million government package.

The creation of Fire Rescue Victoria will allow for a dynamic fire service which, can grow with and meet the needs of Victorian community expectations.

Yours sincerely,

Joel Davey

