

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Sam Bowen and I live in Airport West. I am writing to express my support for the proposed fire service reform.

I am a level 3 firefighter working for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) out of Greenvale Fire Station and have been a firefighter for a bit over two and half years. I completed my recruit course in July 2015 and I am incremented to operate all CFA appliances that are housed at Greenvale Fire Station. I am also EMR qualified and look forward to using those skills when Greenvale comes online as an EMR station in September this year.

In my time as a professional CFA firefighter I have seen first-hand the necessity to have guaranteed backup on the fire ground. There had been a number of occasions where we have been undermanned on the fire ground, putting in jeopardy the safety of the community and also the safety of my work colleagues. Having the guarantee that a second truck has been dispatched is a major step towards ensuring and preventing these safety issues on the fire ground.

With the ever growing population and high call rates on the urban fringe of Melbourne, I feel that it is a point where it is unfair to expect volunteers to continually take time out of their busy lives to turn out to fire calls. Having one fire service will help take the burden off volunteers where call rates are high. It will also ensure that residents living in these high growth areas are getting value for money when they pay their fire service levy as they will be getting a guaranteed response of highly trained firefighters.

All career firefighters I work with love their jobs and the satisfaction they get from helping the community. The uncertainty of what the future holds as well as the negative attitudes towards career firefighter (from certain political parties and media organisations) has taken its toll and morale levels in the workplace are at an all-time low.

We as firefighters want what is best for the community and what is safest for our families. I hope this letter assists in illustrating to you the extreme importance in modernising our current fire services to deliver Victoria with a safe and professional service.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Bowen

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