

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

Dear Select Committee.

My Name is Phillip Miatke, I am a Leading Firefighter in the CFA. I have been a Career Firefighter for 6 years and a member of the CFA for 8 years now. I currently live in Mildura, and also work full time at the Mildura Fire Station. (The most remote Integrated Station in Victoria)

I have also worked at Frankston Fire Station for 2 years, and Patterson River Fire Station for 1 year. This has given me a great insight into Both Urban and Rural Integrated Stations

I was also a Volunteer Firefighter with the Scoresby Fire Brigade from January 2009 until May 2011.

I believe with my volunteer and career service in both urban and rural areas of Victoria, it has given me a good understanding of how CFA operates.

**I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reforms to the fire services for the following reasons**

- The fire services boundaries have not had significant change in over 60 years. Heavily populated areas of Melbourne, are still considered to be “country” areas. (Areas such as Dandenong, Geelong, Craigeburn and Eltham)
- Volunteers in many areas are doing the best they can to meet the growing demands of emergency response, but due to family/work/location/time and other commitments this is getting harder and harder.
- With the introduction of 7 career firefighters being dispatched to all calls in proposed FRV areas, the community will receive an increased service and firefighters responding to the call will have guaranteed back up and improved safety.
- Although already regularly working side by side at many calls, CFA and MFB have many differences making this harder than it should be. CFA and MFB currently run different trucks, different radios channels and networks, talk to a different comms centre, have different Breathing apparatus and more. The formation of FRV would gradually bring this into line and ensure interoperability between two separate crews in similar areas is much better than current arrangements
- The current long standing EBA battle will be a lot easier to resolve, the Chief and CEO of CFA have already stated the with recent introduced legislation by the federal government, signing of an EBA for CFA staff under the CFA would be impossible. Creating FRV and having one agreement for all career firefighters would be
- Morale has never been lower, and mental health issues have never been higher than what they are now in the fire services. This reform can only help improve these issues. My Senior Station Officer at Mildura has been a full time firefighter for 34 years, and has told me on numerous occasions that the last 3 years have been the worst in his history for morale.

[REDACTED]

**I would also like to note some of the negative things being said regarding the reform and why I believe they aren't true.**

*"Volunteers will have to leave integrated stations"* – The Chief Officer of CFA, the CEO of CFA, the Emergency Services Minister and the Premier of Victoria, have all stated that under the reform, volunteers currently at integrated stations are welcome to remain there and continue serving their community.

*"There will be a reduction in surge capacity"* – If all volunteers at integrated stations are welcome to stay, and current 100% volunteer brigades will not change one bit with the reform, how possibly could there be a reduction in surge capacity??

*"Volunteers will up and leave in large numbers"* – If this is true, then they are not there for the right reasons to begin with.

*"Fire Rescue Victoria will see Career firefighters being trained in Road Accident Rescue and this will take the job off SES Volunteers"* – Whilst I understand the passion and skillsets some SES volunteers have for Road Accident Rescue, training career firefighters will be able to guarantee a 90 Second response to motor vehicle accidents, and start working on removing trapped patients far quicker than what the SES currently does in proposed FRV areas. Ego's, hobbies, history, traditions aside, the faster an emergency service is on scene at a rescue, the better off the patient, family, community and other emergency services on scene are.

Would members of the public actually support a longer timed response to a motor vehicle accident by SES, knowing there are Career Firefighters on scene that could have had the training and tools, but politics got in the way? I think not.

I appreciate your time taken to read this. Please make your decision based on the community and giving Victoria a high-standard of emergency response. Not just keeping people happy.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Miatke

[REDACTED]