

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

I am a Firefighter Level 2 who has served with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade for the past 1.5 years and currently attached to No. 10 Station (Richmond), A Platoon. Before my service with the MFB I was a Volunteer Firefighter for 9 years with Caroline Springs Fire Brigade which is an integrated CFA station in District 14 having joined in 2007. I have completed a Certificate II and II in public safety as part of my employment training as well as a bachelor's degree in Aerospace Engineering (Honours) which I completed before my service with the MFB.

I have spent my entire life living on the outer fringes of Melbourne in a combination of integrated and non-integrated areas of metropolitan Melbourne, and have both witnessed and experienced the exponential growth of local communities in these areas.

My prior positions have provided invaluable insight into the essential work that is performed by both professional and volunteer firefighters. As a result, I am in full support of the fire services reform. I would like to briefly describe two major considerations for my support.

**Impact on volunteers**

I am of the firm belief that the current reform has no impact upon volunteers. Volunteers will continue to train and respond alongside professional firefighters at integrated stations.

The reform will alleviate the pressure of volunteer response times in areas of high population density which require a faster and more effective response to meet the demands of a densely populated area. A guaranteed response model means appliances are appropriately committed even if volunteers are deployed on strike teams away from their local turnout area, or otherwise unavailable.

Strike teams and task forces will continue to operate as they do in the current capacity. Volunteers are pivotal in areas of low population density, such as rural Victoria, and the current reform would see an increase in funding and training which can only benefit and compliment volunteers, and most importantly: serve the community. The ability for volunteers in neighbouring districts to muster and respond to emergencies in a surge capacity is an important role and therefore remains unchanged.

Based on my own experience, professional firefighters were always willing to train and respond with volunteers who dedicated their time to serving the community.

## **Emergency Medical Response**

EMR has become one of the most successful achievements of the MFB by providing life-saving support to the community within the metropolitan fire district. I find it disconcerting that this program is not rolled out into areas of high population density, due to conformance to boundaries that haven't been reviewed in 60 years.

During my short career with the MFB, I have only ever known dispute. I have witnessed colleagues endure severe emotional tolls as this EBA negotiation escalated into a politically-driven agenda which is failing to consider the ultimate goal of fire service reform: public safety. It would be a blessing to see colleagues finally able to continue their careers in peace whilst the public receives a reformed public safety model that they definitely deserve.

Yours Sincerely,

Dean Fortomaris