

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Rod Mills I'm a Leading Firefighter at Geelong City Fire Station and I live in Barwon Heads.

I have been in the job for 7 years and hold rescue aerial appliance qualifications.

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

As a firefighter I feel that it is important to have guaranteed backup - guaranteed that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes.

This will mean better community safety and protection for my family and yours.

Employing all career firefighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity it will have no effect what so ever on how volunteers currently turn out all it will mean is that all career firefighters will be serving under the one banner, and the volunteer's under their own separate banner.

Volunteer support will still be maintained with operational firefighters (OO's OMs etc being employed by FRV but continuing their roles through an arrangement with CFA)

The reform areas are around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response

The 35 areas are now highly urbanised with high residential, high industrial and high commercial risk.

The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment etc across the state.

It will be better to have all career staff being employed by one fire service.

The damage the disputation in the workplace has had on our workplace is irreparable and the additional strain that it has had on our families has been unbearable.

It has turned us from a person the public look up to a person that the public think are militant thugs without knowing the facts about us and just hearing the lies the media have been saying about us.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA; and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades etc

**Below are examples from my experiences which demonstrates the failures of the current structure:**

When working at Ballarat it was not uncommon to get a call to Wendouree and hear Wendouree pumper turn out then drive past their station and find their pumper still in the station with only 1 person at the station.

Other occasions firetrucks would turn out and only have 1 member on the truck and if this truck was the only truck coming to my house and my family was trapped inside and when the truck turned up with 1 person they would not be able to run the job, get water out then get water in, then put on BA and safely conduct a search on their own without any back up.

Yours sincerely,

Rod Mills.