

To the Fire Services Reform Bill Committee,

My name is Chris Willmott. I am firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, currently stationed at Oakleigh Fire Station.

Having read the draft legislation I believe it to be a huge positive step for the people of Victoria, particularly those living on the urban fringe and in the growth areas of Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

I consider myself lucky to have been able to buy my house in Mount Waverley many years ago, an option which is now out of reach for many young men and women these days who are pushed further and further out chasing housing affordability. As a result I see less young people actively engaged in my community – a pattern that is replicated in many municipalities. These are the same young people that should be forming the backbone of any volunteer workforce, who are absent in increasing numbers as they are forced move further out and work longer hours to afford their family dream.

For a modern Melbourne (and our larger regional centres) to rely so heavily as the primary fire and emergency response force is a flawed model that will inevitably have a cost in both lives and property.

The proposed Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 addresses this issue in two key ways:

- Amalgamation of the Career Firefighting workforce, which will lead to greater interoperability, flexibility and capability to deploy a highly qualified firefighting workforce wherever required in Victoria (especially in relation to Urban fire risks).
- An in built strategy and process for the review of community risk to facilitate the expansion of areas to be protected by the proposed Fire rescue Victoria.

Kind regards,

Chris Willmott

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