

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

**1. I am Luke Shearer**

- • Station Officer Melton Fire Station
- • Country Fire Authority
- • 10 years of service,

**2. I work at Melton Fire Station.**

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

- To have seven firefighters on the fire ground will give me the ability to operate safely without the need for me to make a decision to put my firefighters at risk when there are insufficient firefighters dispatched to an incident.
- This legislation is fundamentally about enhancing community safety. The fire boundaries have not changed in over 60 years, with Victoria recording unprecedented growth the modernising of the fire services will ensure that the community has the best possible fire service now and into the future with the establishment of the Fire District Review Panel.
- This proposed legislation will have no impact on the surge capacity of the volunteer firefighting capacity in Victoria. The legislation is clear that the vital role that volunteer firefighters currently do won't change and in fact the government has included an addition \$100 million to further enhance their capacity.
- The support will not change with the Operations Officers and Operations Managers continuing to do exactly the same work they do with volunteers via an agreement between FRV and CFA
- These reforms only involve 35 integrated stations of the 1200 CFA stations across the state. These reforms will not affect volunteer brigades or any response to bushfires.
- The 35 integrated stations mentioned above have now become highly urbanised and present a large risk due to the growth. These areas deserve the best possible fire service and this can only be achieved by the establishment of FRV and the seven firefighters despatched to an incident. This will also be further enhanced by the Fire District Review Panel, reviewing future growth and fire service boundaries to meet future risks and deficiencies.
- The reforms to the fire services will standardise and streamline training for career firefighters with, standardised equipment, training and specialist response standards. Currently these above mentioned are fields apart and don't work well when MFB/ CFA are dispatched to an incident. For example MFB and CFA's HART (High Angle Rescue Technicians) teams operate with different a roping system, which at times causes confusion and delays when there is a need to operate together.

- To have all career firefighters employed by the one employer will streamline processes and reduce the need to double up on departments. This will provide a cost benefit to the citizens of Victoria.
- To be able to start in a new fire service will be a great achievement. Currently the workforce both CFA and MFB are tired of being used as political footballs and just want to get on with our jobs. To have a new management structure that doesn't have any disruptive history with its employees will be a fresh start and I would hope that a new management structure would treat its employees with respect, as we have not had the respect for the ten years I have been a career firefighter.

Yours sincerely,  
Luke Shearer

