



Mr Tim Watling
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

ewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Monday, 12 September 2011

Dear Mr Watling

Inquiry into the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) is the association representing the state's 60,000 Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, of whom approximately 35,000 are front line firefighters.

VFBV respectfully requests that the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations include volunteer firefighters in any additional protection to be provided by the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill.

CFA volunteers protect all of country Victoria and 60% of suburban Melbourne. CFA has a little over 30 integrated fire stations manned by staff firefighters and volunteers who work side by side, responding to the same incidents, using the same equipment and facing the same risks. Among CFA's nearly 1,200 all-volunteer brigades there are hundreds servicing urban areas and working in an urban risk environment, in suburban Melbourne and country centres.

Responding to more than 36,000 incidents each year, CFA volunteers and staff firefighters face the same hazards - the same mix of structure, industrial and chemical incidents – and train to the same standards.

More...

CFA is a volunteer based, community embedded fire and emergency service. By legislation its volunteers and staff work together in a fully integrated manner - whether the firefighters responding to a particular call are staff or volunteer, they experience the same hazards and deserve the same levels of recognition and support in dealing with the results of those hazards.

Accordingly, any legislation designed to amend the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act to address health risks to paid firefighters should equally consider the needs of their volunteer counterparts.

Should members of the Senate Committee wish to undertake additional discussions or obtain more information about the role of volunteers, VFBV can be contacted on (03) 9886 1141, at vfsv@vfsv.com.au or by conventional mail at PO Box 453, Mt Waverley 3149.

Yours sincerely

Peter Beaton
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Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
On behalf of VFBV Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ford